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An Illuminative Evaluation exploring access to, and use of Alternative Provision as a preventative approach to secondary school exclusion. What is the role of the Educational Psychology in this context?

'Is this the best option?'

An Illuminative Evaluation exploring access to, and use of Alternative Provision as a preventative approach to secondary school exclusion. What is the role of the Educational Psychology in this context?

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Abstract:

This research is an Illuminative Evaluation (IE) exploring the access and use of Alternative Provision (AP) as a preventative approach to secondary school exclusions in one Local Authority (LA) in the West Midlands. The research also explores the role of the Educational Psychologist (EP) in this context.

Longitudinal studies highlight both the short- and long-term implications of both permanent and fixed term exclusion on young people (YP) and their families (Pirrie et al., 2011). The number of fixed term exclusions have increased in recent years as has the demand for AP. The demand often means AP is oversubscribed, putting a strain on this sector to deliver high-quality provision (House of Commons Committee, 2018). Much of the literature in this context focuses on the quality of provision (McCluskey et al., 2015; Pennacchia & Thompson, 2016), little is known about the 'referral processes' (Mills & Thomson, 2018), how YP arrive at AP (Trotman et al., 2019) and the role of the Educational Psychologist in this context (Bagley & Hallam 2015).

To explore how AP is used and accessed through the Alternative Provision Panel (AP Panel) in one LA, the social constructivist and collaborative methodological approach, IE was selected. Four LA professionals, three EPs, and two AP professionals were interviewed. This was combined with an analysis of LA documentation. In accordance with IE, findings were collaboratively presented to the LA to allow for joint problem solving and the development of the next steps.

The research findings highlighted that using AP as a preventative approach to school exclusion relied on effective collaboration, dual placement, and incorporated the voice and interest of the YP. Perceived problems arose when schools did not take accountability for YP, and YP were 'offloaded' to AP. Professionals perceived the difference between mainstream and AP contributed to positive outcomes. Several strengths and areas for development emerged of the AP Panel. The role of the EP in this context and the barriers to accessing the service have also been discussed. Recommendations and implications for practice have been shared with the LA and explored in this thesis. Future research should explore the perceptions of the referral process from the viewpoints of parents, YP and schools. It would also be interesting to hear the views of ethnic minorities as they are over-represented in school exclusions and APs.

Acknowledgments

Dedicated to my Grandparents.

Who were unable to see me start and finish this journey...

Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulation and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidates own work, Work is done in collaboration with or, with the assistance of others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

Signed: J.K.Kandola   Date: 03.09.2021

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List of Abbreviations

YP	Young People
LA	Local Authority
SEMH	Social and Emotional Mental Health
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
AP	Alternative Provision
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
AP Panel	Alternative Provision Panel
FAP	Fair Access Panel
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
EPs	Educational Psychologists
EHCP	Education Health Care Plans
DfE	Department of Education
IE	Illuminative Evaluation
TA	Thematic Analysis
CA	Content Analysis

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

This thesis will explore the access and use of Alternative Provision (AP) as a preventative approach to secondary school exclusion within one Local authority (LA) in the West Midlands. The research will also explore the role of the Educational Psychologist (EP) in this context.

School fixed term exclusions continues to rise, with disruptive behaviour cited as the most common reason for these exclusions (National Statistics, 2020). Rises in exclusions have seen the AP sector in demand and oversubscribed (Pennacchia & Thompson, 2016), putting a strain on this sector to deliver high-quality provision (House of Commons Education Committee, 2018). Whilst much of the research and policy focuses on the quality of provision (McCluskey et al. 2015; Pennacchia and Thompson 2016), little is known about the 'referral process' and what contributes to the decision making (Mills & Thompson, 2018; Trotman et al., 2019).

It is intended that by exploring the processes, policies, and experiences of key professionals using Illuminative Evaluation (IE), a comprehensive understanding of the reality surrounding the use of AP and the 'referral process' will be gained (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Stake, 1976; Jamieson et al., 1977; Burden, 2008). The intention is to use this illuminative evaluation to support the LA in identifying potential areas of development.

1.2 Topic Significance

Evidence implies there is damaging consequences of permanent exclusion on YP and their families (Pirrie et al., 2011). Prolonged fixed term exclusions create a range of short- and longer-term challenges for YP, ranging from a personal feeling of injustice and rejection, stigmatisation in local communities, conflict with parents and anxieties about future job prospects (Power & Taylor 2020). Longitudinal studies by Pirrie et al. (2011) suggests permanent exclusion have been linked to a range of long-term adverse outcomes, such as poor mental health, unemployment, involvement in crime and homelessness. Further to this, those excluded from school are already deemed the most vulnerable in society. For example, they are seven times more likely to have a special educational need and four times more likely to have grown up in poverty (Gill et al., 2017).

AP is one of the alternatives to school exclusions; it refers to the educational provision that YP may attend when their mainstream school is no longer a viable option (DfE 2013). A definition and critique of AP has been provided in the literature review (Chapter 2). In the academic year 2018/2019, there were 438,300 fixed-term exclusions[1] and 7,894 permanent exclusions in England. 2018/19 saw an increase of fixed term exclusions and a decrease in permanent exclusions. (National statistics 2020). Interestingly statistics have seen an increase in AP, it was suggested that 32,439 YP were attending local authority funded APs (National Statistics 2021).

YP who attend AP are likely to have other indicators of needs, for example statistics suggested that 80% had Special Educational Needs (SEN) (compared to 15% of all school-age pupils), and 40% were entitled to free school meals (compared to 14% in the state sector) (Danechi, 2019). As stated by Danechi (2019) YP at the end of Key Stage 4 achieve far lower attainment than their peers and are highly likely to become NEET (Not in education, employment, or training). A limitation of the statistics is that the size of this sector remains largely unknown as many APs remain unregistered; meaning these statistics could be higher.

Given the vulnerability of YP attending AP and the likelihood of poor outcomes (Taylor, 2012; Danechi, 2019), it is imperative that research continues to explore and evaluate best practice in AP. The limited research surrounding the ''referral process'' (Mills & Thompson, 2018; Trotman et al., 2019) and the role of the EP in this context suggest the significance for this topic to be researched.

1.3 Professional and Personal Interests
Before applying for the doctorate, I worked in many pastoral roles in mainstream secondary schools in some of the country's most deprived regions. During one of the positions held, I worked closely with a young person in year 8, who was eligible for free school meals, and who I now recognise as having Social and Emotional Mental Health Needs (SEMH). He had received several fixed-term exclusions and had two failed managed moves. The Headteacher believed the mainstream setting was not suited to this young person, and it was therefore agreed that he would attend an AP. Much to my disagreement, my involvement with this young person

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[1] There was 310,733 school fixed term exclusion and 5,057 permanent exclusions in 2019/20 (National Statistics, 2021). The drop could be attributed to school closures during the pandemic. Subsequently these have not been reported as it is not representative of a full academic year.

slowly ceased. Two years later, I was informed that the young person had become involved in county lines and had been arrested for several offences.

Furthermore, coming from a less privileged background and my personal experience of being fixed term excluded from school has created a passion and drive for me to work with some of the most disadvantaged YP. My motivation to complete this thesis was driven by my desire to improve practices, to contribute to the broader discussion, and help to ensure that we do not fail the YP of our society.

1.4 Aims and Research Questions

The current research aims to illuminate how AP supports YP at risk of school permanent exclusion in secondary school. The research also aims to explore the current 'referral processes' used in the LA, also known as the Alternative Provision Panel (AP Panel), and the role of the EP in this context. By completing initial observations of the AP Panel, documentary analysis and interviews with key professionals, it is hoped that strengths and potential areas for development will be identified. The information obtained through this research will support future policies and practices within the LA.

Given the above aims of the study, the following research questions were developed:

1) How do key professionals view the use of AP as a preventative approach to school permanent exclusion?

2) What are professionals' perceptions of the AP Panel as an effective process for accessing AP?

3) How do key professionals think the AP panel could be further developed?

4) How do key professionals think EPs can support in this context to ensure the best outcomes for YP?

1.5 Research Setting

The research took place in one service: Seabreeze, which is part of children services in one LA in the West Midlands. In-depth details regarding the role and context of Seabreeze is provided in Chapter 3: Methodology (3.6.2 'learning Milieu'). For the purposes of introducing the context, some central aspects of that context are explained below. The AP Panel was developed from the Fair Access Panel (FAP). LA professionals recognised the need for a panel

that explicitly explored and monitored the use of AP. The motivation for the AP Panel included reducing LA spending on the AP sector. The multi-agency AP Panel is attended by various professionals within children services and external agencies, e.g., the police. Referrals to the AP Panel can be made by secondary schools, and several professionals within the LA (e.g., keyworkers or professionals from fair access team). The panel members jointly decide whether an AP is appropriate and whether the LA will fund the placement.

1.6 Methodology and Epistemological stance

The methodological approach of this study is IE (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Jamieson et al., 1977; Burden, 2008). There were several rationales for using this approach; firstly, IE allows the researcher to evaluate processes within their unique context. This research was concerned with evaluating the access and use of AP as a preventative approach to permanent exclusion, from the viewpoints of key professionals whilst considering the unique context. Furthermore, Educational Psychology is increasingly adopting consultative practises (Wagner 1995; Kelly Wolfson and Boyle 2008; Nolan and Moreland, 2014). The collaborative approaches of IE are in line with these practises and values (Burden 2008).

Secondly, the epistemological stance of this study was that of social constructivism and interpretivism. IE aligns itself with the concept that reality is subjective and socially constructed through individuals making meaning from their experiences. Reality is also created by complex social networking between individuals and their interactions (Burden 2008). It is influenced by historical, cultural, and political contexts (Crotty 1998; Lincoln et al., 2011). The study aimed to explore participants' perceptions of AP, the AP Panel, and the role of the EP in facilitating this. The research also aimed to consider the socio-political context in which the research was situated. Given these reasons, it was deemed that IE was an appropriate methodological approach for this study.

To summarise, IE is based on several key assumptions:

- Thoroughly context bound.

- Multi-faceted in its perspectives.

- Illustrative of the mismatch that often occurs between the rhetoric and action.

- Concerned with revealing a recognised and recognisable reality.

By adopting the '5 staged' approach of IE, (Parlett and Hamilton 1972; Parlett 1974). interviews will be conducted with the key professionals identified in stage 2 and LA documentation will be collected and analysed to allow for triangulation of findings (Burden, 2008). Using IE, I intend to construct and present a "recognisable reality" (Burden, 2008 p224) of AP and the AP Panel to help the LA identify potential areas of development.

1.7 Terminology and Definitions

To establish a clear, coherent, and shared understanding of the information presented in this thesis, this section will highlight some of the keywords used and their definition.

- **Illuminative Evaluation**: IE has been referred to as 'Illuminative Evaluation' and 'Illuminative Research' in the literature (Jamieson et al., 1977). The term 'illuminative evaluation' will be used in this thesis to reflect the nature of this research.

- **Alternative Provision (AP)**: A definition of AP has been provided in the literature review. AP has been referred to as 'Alternative Educational Provision' (Russell & Thompson, 2011) 'offsite educational provision' (Briggs, 2010) or 'Education Otherwise than at School' (McCluskey et al., 2015). I will refer to this as AP in this thesis as this is the term that is used in statutory guidance (DfE, 2013) and more frequently within recent research. (Appendix 1 shares the definitions of the different types of AP).

- **Young people (YP)**: The Children and Families Act (2014) suggests the term 'children' encompasses those up to 15 years of age, whilst the term 'YP' refers to those between 16 and 25. YP will be used in this thesis as I believe this term is more appropriate for 'children' in secondary schools. It will be used to describe YP between the ages 11 -16.

- **School exclusion**: There are two types of school exclusions; fixed term and permanent exclusion. Fixed term exclusion refers to a young person being excluded from school for a fixed period. A young person can receive up to 45 days in a single academic year (Education Act 2011). This is also referred to as 'temporary external exclusion' in the literature (Tilson & Oxley, 2020). Permanent exclusion refers to a young person being permanently excluded from school. Once a young person is excluded permanently, the LA is responsible for finding a suitable educational placement (Education Act,

2011). The current research is interested in those YP who may have received several fixed term exclusions and are at risk of permanent school exclusion.

- **Maintained schools:** These state schools are also known as 'community schools' or 'local authority-maintained' schools and they receive their funding from the LA (Black et al., 2019). In this research, I will refer to these schools as maintained schools as this is what they are referred to in the literature (James 2014; Black et al., 2019), policy (DfE, 2013) and in practice.

- **Academies:** Academies or 'free schools' are state-funded, non-fee-paying schools independent of the LA. Their funding agreement comes from the Secretary of State, and they are run by an Academy trust (Academies Act, 2010). Academies refers to schools that have converted from maintained to academy status, whereas 'free schools' refers to new state schools (Roberts & Danechi, 2019). For this thesis, I will refer to these schools as Academies to encompass both, as this is how they are referred to in statutory guidance relating to APs (DfE, 2013)

- **Managed moves:** This is a formal agreement between parents/carers, YP and school that allows for a young person deemed to be at risk of permanent exclusion to have a trial transfer at another school whilst dually registered at both schools. It is often an alternative to permanent school exclusion (DCSF, 2008; Bagley and Hallam, 2015).

- **Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND)/(SEN):** A young person has SEND if they have a disability or learning difficulty which requires special educational provision to be made for them. This includes a greater learning difficulty than most of the same age, and/or a disability that hinders them from accessing the educational setting (DfE/DoH, 2015). SEN will predominantly be used in this thesis.

- **Social, Emotional, Mental Health (SEMH):** SEMH is a term that was introduced in the Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice in 2014 (DfE/DoH, 2015). It replaced terms such as BESD (Behaviour Emotional & Social Difficulties) and EBD (Emotional & Behaviour Difficulties) (Sheffield and Morgan, 2016). It covers a range of SEMH needs and is identified as SEN (Martin-Denham 2021).

- **Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator** (SENCo): The SENCo is the individual within each school with overall responsibility for ensuring provision coordination for all YP with SEND (Mackenzie 2007; DfE/DoH 2015).

- **Educational Health Care Plans (EHCPs):** An EHCP is a legal document which states the strengths, difficulties, outcomes, and provisions needed for YP covering the ages of 0-25. It also covers education, health, and social care domains. (DfE/DoH 2015)

- **Statutory Assessments**: This term is used to describe a detailed investigation to find out exactly what the young person's SEN are. This can be requested by school, parent/carer or YP from the LA (DfE/DoH 2015).

1.8 Structure of the Thesis
The remainder of this thesis will be presented in the following chapters:

Table 1: Structure and Outline of Thesis

Chapter	Brief outline
2. Literature Review	The literature reviewed from a systematic literature search (appendix 2) will be presented in this chapter. The chapter will also share the relevant psychological theories and a clear rationale leading to the research questions.
3. Methodology	The methodological approach taken to the current research will be presented in this chapter (IE), including how each of the phases was conducted. It will also explore the epistemological and ontological stance. A critique of IE, alternative methodology, generalisation, quality criteria and has also been discussed.
4. Findings	This chapter is concerned with the findings of the research. Using Thematic Analysis (TA) for semi structured interviews and Content Analysis (CA) for LA Documentation the findings will be presented. The chapter concludes with a triangulation of findings in relation to the four research questions.
5. Discussion	The discussion chapter explores the findings in relation to the research questions, reviewed literature, and psychological theory. The discussion will present recommendations for practice including a model developed for the referral process (figure 6).
6. Conclusion	The thesis concludes with implications for LA and EP practices, strengths and limitations of the research, how quality criteria was ensured and a personal reflection.

1.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a brief introduction to the thesis. It has presented an overview of the importance of the study, the rationale, the aims, and the professional and personal interest for the research. It has incorporated a brief description of the methodological approach used in this research and the reasons for its use in relation to the epistemological stance and the aims. The definitions of keywords and terminology used throughout the thesis have also been provided.

The next chapter will be a critical review of the pertinent literature related to this research.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the access and use of Alternative Provision (AP) as a preventative approach for Young People (YP) at risk of permanent exclusion. The research also aims to explore the role of the EP in this context. This chapter will explore the current literature surrounding the use of AP. The specific details regarding the literature search can be found in Appendix 2.

The chapter will start by critically evaluating the definition of AP, followed by the historical and political context. The literature review will then examine our understanding of why fixed-term exclusions have increased resulting in the subsequent referrals to AP. The discussion will include debates around YPs' rights, the language used to describe these YP and social inclusion. The next part of the literature review will then focus on the viewpoints from key stakeholders surrounding the factors that require consideration and what might contribute to the decision making. The literature review will then critically explore the research surrounding the 'referral process' and the role of the EP in school exclusions, accessing and using AP. The final part of the literature review will outline the psychological theory underpinning this research: the eco-systemic theory, and the social model of disability. The chapter will conclude with a clear rationale based on the literature review, a summary of the chapter and the research questions.

2.2 The literature Search

Initial readings on the use of AP as a preventative approach to permanent school exclusion and the legislation surrounding this began in August 2019 using the University of Bristol's library search and google scholar. A systematic literature search was then used in this literature review to identify relevant research (Bryman, 2016). Tranfield et al., (2003) propose literature reviews have previously lacked 'thoroughness' and tend to reflect the biases of the researcher. Using a systematic literature search can help improve the rigour, transparency, and breadth of the literature review (Mallet et al., 2012). In depth details regarding the systematic literature search can be found in appendix 2 (e.g., search terms, exclusion and inclusion criteria and rationale).

2.3 Alternative Provision

2.3.1 Definition

AP refers to the educational provision YP may attend when their mainstream school is no longer a viable option. It is described by the DfE as

> *"...for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness, or other reasons, would not receive a suitable education; education arranged by schools for pupils on a fixed-period exclusion; and pupils being directed by schools to offsite provision to improve their behaviour"*

(DfE, 2013, P3).

APs' common characteristics include a student-centred curriculum, small class sizes, one-to-one interactions between YP and staff, a supportive environment, and a flexible structure (Thomson and Pennacchia, 2015; O'Gorman et al., 2016). A potential critique of this definition is that the onus is placed on the YP to improve their behaviour. Therefore, it could be suggested that this definition is grounded in principles of the social model of disability. This model proposes that society disenables physically impaired people by unnecessarily isolating and excluding them from full participation within society (Oliver 2013). From this definition it could be suggested that both legislation and school settings are disenabling YP. Furthermore, with fixed-term exclusions linked predominantly to 'disruptive behaviour', research suggests that this is likely linked to needs not being met (DfE 2017; Parker et al., 2018).

Further critique of this definition is proposed by McCluskey et al (2015) who's research suggested the definitions surrounding AP and PRUs was problematic. Inevitably the lack of a clear definition raises questions about the experiences of YP and their families. These families are often already in a stressful situation, as they attempt to understand a system, whilst also making informed choices to exercise their rights. PRUs come under the definition of a type of AP (Appendix 1). However, in the current LA the YP attending PRUs are predominantly permanently excluded from mainstream settings.

2.3.2 Historical and Political Context

The notion of the 'disruptive child' had become widespread in education during the 1970s, alongside various forms of AP. These provisions primarily consisted of off-site units and were termed 'disruptive units' or 'support centres' (Menzies and Baars, 2015). Within two decades, APs were heavily criticised for numerous reasons (Menzies and Baars, 2015). For example, a

series of 1994 government circulars 'pupils with problems' recognised that provision was 'piecemeal', the 'referral process' was likely to be informal, which also varied between different localities. Concerns were also mounting around the number of permanently excluded pupils from their schools (Ogg and Kaill, 2010). To formalise and standardise AP, PRUs were presented in Wales & England in 1994. Three years later, the Labour government introduced the statutory duty for LAs to provide alternative education for pupils who could not be educated in mainstream settings (Menzies & Baars, 2015).

In a bid to significantly reduce the number of permanent school exclusions nationally, the government also set new targets and raised the threshold for the decisions to exclude (Ogg and Kaill, 2010). Ogg and Kaill (2010) suggest the reduction of permanent school exclusions due to this government initiative, saw the increase and more widespread use of alternatives to permanent exclusion, such as managed moves and on-site 'internal exclusion units'.

In addition, under the Academies Act (2010), academies have the autonomy to provide alternative education for YP who have stopped attending school, who might be at risk of permanent exclusion or have been permanently excluded (Pirrie et al., 2011; Putwain et al., 2016). With the change in legislation and the increase of YP accessing some form of AP, the agenda shifted to ensuring YP in AP receive a high-quality education (Taylor, 2012).

Ofsted (2011) produced a report outlining the areas that required development and urgent attention in AP. They highlighted that many APs are largely uninspected and unregulated with minimal arrangements to evaluate the quality of provision. However, the report also emphasised where provisions were used well. In these situations, the YP's needs were being met, they were supported holistically throughout the curriculum, information was shared between provision and school, careful and effective monitoring of student progress was in place, and the YP felt valued by adults in their setting.

Taylor's (2012) report was critical of the commissioning role played by many schools, APs and LAs. Taylor (2012) emphasised that in some APs, YP leave without attaining what they can achieve. Whilst he notes that the social and emotional needs must be met, this is often at the expense of academic rigour. AP was most effective when it was seen as an integral part of the education system rather than on the periphery. The recommendations included policy and

practice to increase focus on effective assessment and early identification of YP's needs. Taylor (2012) states that the responsibility for quality assurance and pupil progress should lie with the commissioner of the AP and should also go beyond a 'tick box exercise'. The change in the socio-political climate in 2010 included a change in agenda from the previous government, this likely influenced some of the findings of Taylor's report. A further limitation is that this report was written nearly a decade ago; I question whether these findings are still representative?

Ofsted (2016) suggests that the matters highlighted by Taylor (2012) regarding quality assurance, registration, regulation of AP, and the access to a narrow range of subjects continues to cause concerns. More positively, Ofsted propose that more schools appeared to be refusing to use APs they felt were inadequate. Some schools were seen to develop their own in-house alternatives when they perceived AP to be unsuitable. Furthermore, a significant proportion of schools were working in partnership with one another to share information, source, commission, and quality assure APs. More importantly, many YP had positive comments to share about the provision they were attending. Similar findings were also identified by Tate and Greatbatch (2017).

Based on Taylor's (2012) report, in 2013 the DfE produced statutory guidance for the use of AP for LAs. Schools may direct children and YP off-site for an education to help improve behaviour, and governing bodies of schools are responsible for arranging a suitable 'full-time' education from the sixth day of a fixed-term exclusion (DfE, 2013). There are several critiques around this statutory guidance. Firstly, the term 'full-time' is not defined by law; therefore, this is open to professional judgement. The guidance then states:

> "..pupils in AP should receive the same amount of education as they would receive in a maintained school"

> (DfE, 2013 p5).

The term 'should' implies that this is more of a recommendation or desirable goal than an obligation or legal requirement. Furthermore, this legislation only applies to maintained schools and not Academies. Despite this legislation, Menzies and Baars (2015) suggest the developments in AP have not occurred everywhere, nor have the debates surrounding their

use and what underpins them been wholly resolved. There also continues to be a lack of clarity on what these provisions should look like and what standards should they hold themselves accountable to? (Menzies and Baars 2015).

2.4 Increasing Fixed-term Exclusions and Referrals to AP
2.4.1 School Fixed Term Exclusions
The number of fixed-term exclusions continue to steadily rise in England with most recent figures of 438,300 in 2018/19 (National Statistics, 2020). Persistent disruptive behaviour was the most common reason for fixed-term exclusions (31%) in 2018/19 (National Statistics, 2020). Paget et al. (2018) propose that 'persistent disruptive behaviour' may be due to unrecognised or inadequately supported needs. Therefore, it could be suggested that exclusion is unlikely to reduce 'disruptive behaviour' as it fails to address the underlying needs. Statutory guidance in England advises that fixed term exclusions should trigger a holistic assessment, extending beyond educational needs to identify and provide intervention for contributory factors (DfE, 2012). However, Paget et al. (2018) highlight it is unclear how often and how effectively such assessments occur.

Furthermore, a limitation of the statistics presented is that the number of YP fixed term excluded from school could be much higher. For example, the Timpson Review (2019) highlighted a small minority of schools 'off-rolling'. While there is no legal definition, Ofsted proposes that 'off-rolling' refers to the practice when a young person is removed from the school register without either a fixed term or permanent exclusion (McShane 2020). Removal from the school register is in the primary interest of the school rather than the child's best interest. 'Off-rolling' includes pressuring the parent to remove the young person from the school to avoid permanent exclusion (Timpson, 2019; McShane, 2020).

In contrast, Menzies & Baars (2015) suggest that schools can be counterproductive when trying to keep all YP in mainstream education. They suggest that permanent exclusion brings access to additional intervention and funding. However, this raises the ethical and moral question of why it takes a permanent exclusion for YP to receive the appropriate intervention. More radically, some professionals may question whether one size fits all, as forcing all YP into mainstream settings is counterproductive (Menzies & Baars; 2015). Whilst others may propose it is the current education system which requires a transformation (Bryson 2010; McCluskey et al., 2015; Tilson & Oxley 2020).

2.4.2 The Rights of the Young Person

Pennacchia & Thompson (2016) propose the definition of AP suggests that these provisions are charged with improving behaviour and preventing situations resulting in permanent exclusion. An increase in school fixed-term exclusions has meant that the AP sector is oversubscribed; putting strain on the alternative sector to deliver high-quality provision (House of Commons Committee, 2018). Gazeley (2010) points out that this results from a failed system, suggesting that access to AP is not always a choice and often appears to be the last resort. However, in critique of these views it could be suggested that the 'last resort' is indicative of schools exhausting all options to avoid taking these steps (Brown, 2018). Gazeley's (2010) research established that APs were used as an integral part of the school disciplinary process, and professional judgement was used to judge when the need for AP was appropriate.

In addition, her research proposed it was difficult for parents and YP to refuse to accept AP if this was suggested as a preventative approach. Similarly, Russell & Thompson (2011) research highlighted that YP and their families had little opportunity to decide what they were offered. Following the findings of the research the rights of the young person are questionable.

The United Nations adopted the Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989. The UNCRC was the lens through which YP were seen to have independent rights and for those rights to be at the heart of socio-political decision-making (Bryson, 2010). The UNCRC encouraged YP's optimistic image as active participants of their rights and a greater sense of commitment to safeguarding those rights. Fundamentally, Article 28 of the UNCRC states the rights to an education based on equal opportunity. Bryson (2010) suggests the dilemma in policy and practice is that AP supports YP's right to an education as stated in Article 28e of the UNCRC 'when schools find they cannot'. However, he proposes that we compromise those same YP's right to equal opportunities by accepting alternatives. He also suggests that APs occupy a somewhat contradictory position in relation to government responsibilities under article 28e.

"A position that touches upon wider debates about the aims of education to shape students to better fit the system, rather than better meet their needs"

(Bryson 2010 p350).

Subsequently, APs can be viewed as both upholding the rights of the young person and seen as colluding with exclusionary practices in some schools. Therefore Bryson (2010) questions, are APs the best we can offer? For whom does it genuinely serve? In addition, Tilson & Oxley (2020) question is it in the best interest of YP or of the school community? They propose that these decisions are often made on the 'weighty interest' of others in the school community.

2.4.3 The social inclusion of 'pushed out' YP

YP who attend AP are often described as disengaged, disaffected, or disconnected (Bryson 2010; Putwain et al., 2016). Putwain et al. (2016) propose these are the

"Hard to teach and hard to reach learners"

(p1)

They are often the most alienated and vulnerable where nothing has worked so far, with AP being the end of the line (Putwain et al, 2016). A critique of the literature is that sometimes the language or narrative that describes these YP is often 'within child'[2]. For example, the words such as 'disengaged' rely heavily on YP. Others have suggested that phrases that consider the contextual and environmental factors and move away from a 'within child' model include 'pushed out learners' and 'marginalised youth' (Menzies & Baars 2015).

Furthermore, a significant amount of these YP have SEN and are entitled to free school meals (Danechi 2019; McCluskey et al.,2015). Pennacchia & Thompson (2016) also indicated that YP who attend AP are more likely to experience family breakdowns, deprivation, have SEN which have not yet been recognised and have previously attended schools judged as 'poor'. However, Menzies and Baars (2015) propose that these labels matter less than the common factor, that they act as a barrier to their social inclusion. From interviewing and meeting various professionals, they suggested YP are not 'pushed out' because schools do not want them, but it is often that the needs of these YP are so significant that schools in this current climate do not have the resourcing or staff to support them. Subsequently, Menzies & Baars (2015) raise the fundamental question about how the education system can live up to social inclusion and equity?

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[2] The term 'within child' has arisen from the deficit model, that implies the difficulties lie solely with the child (Cochran & Woolever, 1983). It subsequently does not recognize the contextual and environmental factors which have resulted in several fixed-term exclusions

A limitation of the research is that the authors did not share the methodological approach to how data was collected or their positionality. Subsequently, it is a challenge to explore the research rigour of this published document. A further limitation of this publication, it does not provide a definition of what is meant by social inclusion. One of the obstacles for achieving social inclusion is that the definition is unclear (Cobio et al., 2012; Brown, 2018) Simplican et al (2016) imply the lack of clarity in the definition comes from numerous definitions which makes the concept interchangeable with terms such as, social integration, community participation social networking and social capital. Even these concepts are challenging to define as the meaning may differ between individuals as they experience society differently to one another.

Nonetheless Brown (2018) explored the social inclusion of YP attending AP from the perspectives of key decision makers (e.g., EPs, professionals in schools and APs) using a vignette methodology. The research also explores the role of the EP in this context, this will be explored further in this chapter (2.7.3 Educational Psychologist role in AP). Brown's (2018) findings suggest measuring and defining inclusion was challenging and there was a divide between theory and practice. However, professionals discussed the foundation of inclusion being deep-rooted in equality for all YP. The findings of this research also highlighted when accessing AP as a preventative approach school involvement was key to inclusion. Furthermore, several other factors were perceived to be linked to the inclusion of YP in mainstream schooling such as flexibility around needs and behaviour, early intervention, the YP's voice and involvement in school provision. A limitation of this study was that the LA professionals who may be involved in the decision making where not included in the research. Therefore, their views may not reflect the findings. Furthermore, the vignette used was created by the focus group which the AP professionals did not attend, Brown (2018) acknowledges the impact this may have had on the content of the vignette.

2.4.4 Why use AP?

Given the challenges of using AP e.g., right of the YP and the agenda of social inclusion of 'marginalized groups', it is questionable why use AP? Research emphasizes that in some instances it is more exclusionary to keep that YP in a mainstream setting (Menzies & Baars, 2015; Brown 2018). In contrast, Bryant et al. (2018) explored when and why schools may use AP through an online survey of 152 LAs complemented by 15 visits. They highlighted the most

common reasons given was to provide provision for excluded pupils, for mental and physical health-related reasons and early preventative support. Other reasons included alternative educational pathways, re-integrating YP who had been out of formal education, new arrivals and the lack of specialist provision. Furthermore, in the survey, LAs were asked whether they would name an AP on the young person's Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), 68% said they would, 26% would not and 6% said they were unsure. Professionals explained naming AP on an EHCP was often a result of the lack of other available provision, a 'last resort' or as a 'holding' measure until other more specialist provision was allocated (Bryant et al., 2018).

Gazeley's (2010) research emphasised professionals perceived some YP would never be successful in a classroom situation, therefore, AP was necessary in some situations. In this research participants linked this to characteristics of the young person, whilst others linked this to the school. A limitation of Gazeley's research was that it did not explore in greater depth what this professional judgement entailed and why AP was considered. In Briggs's (2010) research headteachers reported that they had explored all other 'avenues' and that referrals to AP were the last resort. Furthermore, perceptions suggested the permanent exclusion rates, and that the league position of the schools were the reasons for referral to AP. A limitation of both pieces of research is they were completed over a decade ago. Since then, there has been several legislation changes (e.g., DfE, 2012; 2013) which might impact practice differently. However more recently Brown (2018) proposed the decision to use AP was dependent on the impact of the YP on their peers. In addition, some professionals expressed AP is often used to meet the needs of the school rather than the needs of the YP. Similarly, Mills and Thompson (2018) suggest 'Persistent disruptive behaviour' was the main reason for the use of AP, with concerns being shared for the learning of other YP and ultimately on schools' performance.

Additionally, Pennacchia and Thompson's (2016) research suggests that schools are still under immense pressure to exclude 'disruptive' students who are seen as undermining the rights of other YP and pose a threat to the schools' reputation. In some cases, the research highlighted that AP was commissioned to provide respite for teachers and schools from the presenting behaviour they found challenging. In some instances, if the placement did not work out for one young person, another could be sent in their place to ensure the school did not lose out on the money they had spent. Pennacchia and Thompson propose in this scenario, 'disruptive' YP are seen as an *"interchangeable minority group"* (p71), with school engaging in contractual

agreements which entitle them to a certain amount of respite. In cases where this is the guiding principle, AP may not necessarily be selected based on the needs and interests of the YP but selected as it is already in place (Pennacchia and Thompson, 2016).

Undoubtedly respite is a short-term solution, as it fails to challenge underlying problems. If these problems remain unresolved, schools will likely continue to encounter similar challenges with either the same or different YP. A limitation of Pennacchia & Thompson (2016) is that they have not acknowledged their subjectivity in the research. Quality criteria for qualitative work specifies the need for this (Tracey, 2010; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Further to this, the researchers' do not present the research with direct aims, but more of an agenda to present the benefits of using quality complementary AP and problematising the 'return & repair' model. A notable strength of the research was that the researchers used triangulation in data collection, e.g., observations of APs, interviews, collection of documentary materials and interviews with staff and pupils. Depending on how it is used, triangulation allows the researchers to be rigorous with findings, increasing validity (Guion et al., 2011).

In 2018 the government led an inquiry outlining the potential causes in the increased use of AP in relation to the rise in fixed term exclusions (House of Commons Education Committee, 2018). They identified four factors responsible for these decisions:

- A lack of early intervention and support
- Current behaviour policies
- An increase in mental health needs
- Off-rolling, progress 8 and a narrowing curriculum.

One could challenge the inquiry and suggest that many of these factors are heavily influenced by government. Nevertheless, the inquiry proposed several challenges experienced by schools that may contribute to their inability or unwillingness to identify problems and provide support. Factors included a lack of expertise to identify problems, financial resourcing to fund pastoral support. An increase in zero-tolerance behaviour policies has also contributed to the rise in fixed term exclusions. These behaviour policies are rigid, making it difficult for YP with additional needs. Thirdly, the inquiry raised mental health and well-being as a factor,

signifying that there has been an increase in the number of YP who present with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH). Whilst it was recognised in the inquiry that fixed term exclusions might impact a young person's well-being, evidence suggests that rather than a school's failure to identify these YP, it was an effective and timely intervention that prevented fixed term exclusion.

In contrast, other evidence presented in the inquiry suggested that SEMH needs are unidentified as teachers struggle to identify YP with these needs. It was also recognised that progress 8[3] measures in some schools had given incentives for school exclusion (Timpson, 2019). It was also reported in the inquiry that progress 8 can narrow the curriculum, impacting the engagement of some YP (House of Commons Education Committee, 2018). Cole et al. (2019) proposes if the focus remains on academic performance, then schools will continue to find it challenging to focus on pupil well-being, increasing the likelihood of 'disruptive' or challenging' behaviour and fixed term exclusions.

2.5 AP as a Preventative Approach to Permanent Exclusion

Menzies & Baars (2015) propose that rather than treating AP as a 'necessary evil', this type of provision should be valued and welcomed. However, in doing so, it is imperative to improve the quality of provision by upskilling AP to be just as successful as mainstream education (Timpson 2019). Yet the variability in provision offered at AP continues to cause concern, with suitable provision being the exception and not the norm (Tilson & Oxley, 2020). The literature proposes several factors which might contribute to the decision making or to the perceptions around why and how AP is used to prevent permanent school exclusion. This section will explore these proposals under the following themes identified in viewpoints of key professionals and YP:

1. Relationships

2. Dual Placement & Collaboration

3. Curriculum and Teaching

4. Managing Needs or 'Behaviour'

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[3] Progress 8 is used to track pupils academic progress (e.g., the academic 'distance' a student takes). Students' progress counts towards the school's progress 8 scores.

5. Financial Implication

Whilst these have been segregated for ease of reading, it is essential to note that social, emotional and academic learning are intertwined (Malcolm, 2019).

2.5.1 Relationships

One of the factors highlighted in the literature as having crucial importance in the success of AP is the relationships between YP and staff. (Gazeley 2010; O'Gorman et al. 2016; Fitzsimmons et al. 2019; Malcolm, 2019). Poor or lack of relationships between YP and staff in mainstream settings are frequently reported as a perceived factor in placement breakdown (Trotman et al., 2015). Relationships have also been cited as an essential factor in re-integration into mainstream from AP (Atkinson & Rowley, 2019). Gazeley's (2010). Research suggested that YP need advocates whom they can trust, and teachers felt under pressure to meet student attainment targets, making it difficult to get to know YP in a large secondary school. With AP being much smaller, with a high ratio of staff to pupils, perhaps it is this that allows staff to build a relationship with YP (Thomson and Pennacchia, 2015; O'Gorman et al., 2016; Malcolm, 2019).

O'Gorman et al. (2016) completed a systematic review on YPs' experiences of AP. The literature review highlighted that AP was seen as a sanctuary for YP when they offered physical, emotional and psychological safety. The systematic review highlighted that AP fostered a sense of belonging as YP referred to the school community as a 'family'[4]. Similarly, Malcolm (2019) highlighted perceived relationships with staff in AP were of a fundamental importance to YP. Several characteristics of AP were linked to fostering these relationships, for example, smaller class sizes and relational knowledge.

A suggested limitation of the research could be that individual experiences of AP are unique; for example, Briggs's (2010) research highlighted relationships in AP are not always positive. Another limitation of O'Gorman et al. (2016) was due to researcher's capacity only peer-reviewed published articles were included. It is recommended that systematic reviews include published and unpublished studies to reduce publication bias (Higgins et al., 2019). Further-

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[4] Relationships are a critical factor in school belonging (Uslu & Gizier 2017; Roffey et al. 2019). Roffey et al. (2019) define school belonging as the extent to which a young person feels personally respected, accepted, included and supported by others in the school environment.

more, a critique of both studies (Gorman et al., 2016; Malcolm, 2019) is that they only included the views of YP. Exploring the views of key professionals would add further depth to this discussion. For example, what do professionals perceive is the importance of these relationships, how are they developed and maintained?

Fitzsimmons et al. (2019) used semi-structured interviews to collect the views from professionals who work in APs. All the tutors were unanimous about the importance of developing relationships with their students as a prerequisite before learning could take place. Tutors needed to 'connect and tune into' YP; this connection was perceived as reciprocal, where the tutors actively engage with students rather than viewing them as passive recipients. They perceived that it was the teacher's responsibility to initiate these relationships by searching for a 'hook' that resonated with the young person. A participant discussed listening to the nuances and having to gauge not just the student but also their 'world', such as, family, home life, previous experiences and discovering what may be impacting their ability to 'connect'. In a minority of cases, it was challenging to connect with YP; the participants indicated that the lack of positive feelings on either side made the relationship difficult to build and maintain. Tutors reported that whilst they looked for reciprocity in the relationship, it required higher investment from the tutors.

Other factors that helped to maintain these relationships were congruence and empathy. Allowing YP to see their 'true self' was imperative to relationships, as many YP's experiences were frequently hostile around teachers and other authoritative figures. Whilst these findings have provided a broader viewpoint on relationships between professionals and YP in AP, a limitation of this research was the researchers' positionality. The research was undertaken by one of the tutors working in the provision. Subsequently, it is questionable how the participant-researcher relationship impacted the collection of data and data analysis. However, it has been suggested that researchers who conduct qualitative research cannot escape their interpretation brought to data analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Nonetheless similar findings were also highlighted in Nicholson & Putwain (2015).

2.5.2 Dual Placement & Collaboration

Research has highlighted the perceived importance of the relationships between professionals in schools, APs, and the LA, alongside the relationship with families and YP (Pennacchia & Thompson 2016; Brown, 2018). Pennacchia and Thompson (2016) propose that APs should

complement schools rather than working as individual systems in silo. Their research explored a dual placement between AP and school. They emphasise the relationship between school and AP is as equally important as the relationships between YP and professionals. Schools' collaboration with AP meant that this also reduced the stigma for the YP who accessed this support. School data indicated improvements in attainment, attendance, and a reduction in behaviours. How this data was measured or collected was not shared in the research, therefore, caution should be applied when considering the broader implications. Nevertheless, the success in these two case examples was attributed to the relationship between the school and provider, which was indicative of the commitment of the mainstream schools who provided the vital infrastructure, e.g., staff, space, money, and time.

During the research project, the researchers were made aware of YP only attending the complementary provision, suggesting a continued variability in practice. Arguably this is highly problematic when considering the wider implications for YP, e.g., safety, well-being, learning and prospects for employment. Researchers and professionals suggest this type of practice is the 'out of sight, out of mind' approach (Taylor 2012; Pennacchia and Thompson 2016). Criticism of this approach needs to be viewed and understood through the socio-political context. Adding further complexity to this, Pennacchia and Thompson's (2016) findings suggest that complementary AP found it difficult to challenge schools on practice, given the nature of their 'purchaser-provider relationship' in an increasingly competitive market.

In addition, Brown (2018) proposes 'collaboration' was a perceived important factor in the context of using AP to prevent permanent exclusion. 'Collaboration' was underpinned by all key figures within the young person's life working together. Importance was also given to families and YP being part of the collaborative partnerships and joint decision making.

2.5.3 Curriculum & Teaching

Trotman et al. (2019) suggest that APs can offer a bespoke curriculum for YP with additional needs and interests. Trotman et al. (2019) research aimed to explore and better understand how YP arrive in AP and how this is experienced. Their findings suggest that the socio-political context, specifically school academic performance, has contributed to the complexity in AP.

Findings propose that the current national curriculum and performance culture have contributed to YP's negative self-efficacy[5] in their learning. The researchers infer that despite schools' well-intentions to protect YP against mental health, they find themselves complicit in the conditions that potentially exacerbate mental health needs in the climate of performative cultures. In contrast evaluations of APs also encountered challenges when exploring the notion that AP provides vocational pathways, which might be more suited to some YP (Trotman et al., 2019). The research highlighted that the options typically restricted to enduring gendered stereotypes, as succinctly expressed by a participant: 'hair and bricks' for girls and boys. Whilst not intending to degrade those occupations, as for some students this will provide aspirational and fulfilling employment, it has been suggested that APs should ensure career scope for YP through a broad and balanced curriculum (McCluskey et al., 2015).

Similarly, Russell & Thompson (2011) highlighted that APs assumed that YP required vocational options. Again, the curriculum on offer was stereotyped based on gender. In addition, some YP in the study indicated that they aspired to attend higher education and were being offered very little to assist them in meeting these aspirations. An ethnographic approach was adopted for this research; ethnographic research requires the researcher to immerse themselves in the research, where they are no longer an outsider but a participant (Khan, 2018). The researchers did not provide a reflexive account of their stance in the research, which is required in good quality ethnographic research (Lichterman, 2017).

Furthermore, Thomas & Pennacchia (2016) research aimed to explore and focus on the quality of AP and what best practice would entail. Data was collected via seventeen case studies with each case study being produced over a one to three-day visit. Data collection included documentary analysis, observation of activities and interviews with key professionals and YP. The researchers' findings highlighted that functional literacy and numeracy skills ('life skills') were taught to help YP prepare for adulthood, e.g., measuring food for cooking. There was an emphasis on outdoor excursions to ensure social inclusion and to teach YP how to act responsibly. However, this came at the compromise of removing subjects taught in the national curriculum, e.g., humanities, social sciences, and language. The authors raise the argument of

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[5] Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in his or her capacity to produce a designated level of performance (Bandura, 1978). A positive self-efficacy enhances individual accomplishment and well-being and is intrinsically linked to motivation (Bandura, 2010).

access to equal education and YP's rights to a broad and balanced curriculum. A limitation was that the sample was not representative, as only APs that were deemed 'high quality' and 'outstanding' were selected.

McCluskey et al. (2015) interviewed a range of professionals: teachers, headteachers, Educational Psychologists, social services staff, youth offending teams and voluntary sector workers. They also spoke to parents and YP who had experienced school exclusion and had attended AP. Their findings suggested a variability in the curriculum on offer in APs, e.g., some YP were accessing a broad and balanced curriculum, whilst some were only accessing a basic curriculum. In addition to this, LA professionals noted that it was challenging to establish how many hours of education a young person received in AP. The researchers propose that the variability results from APs attempting to flexibly meet YPs' individual needs. However, the researcher proposes that this has resulted in inconsistency and a potential "postcode lottery" of support.

A critique of both studies (McCluskey et al., 2015; Thomas & Pennacchia 2016) is the limited recognition that one size does not fit all (Bryson 2010; Menzies & Baars, 2015). The narrowing of the curriculum and progress 8 in schools has contributed to increased fixed term and permanent exclusions (Cole et al., 2019) and the use of APs (House of Commons Committee, 2018). Subsequently, APs are required to be flexible to meet the potential learning needs of YP. Putwain et al. (2016) explored the teaching and learning in one AP through observation and interviews of YP and staff at the AP. They propose that mainstream schools do not have the resources required to meet the needs of all YP. Their research highlighted that the approach to teaching and having access to an alternative curriculum supported 'disaffected' YP to participate in their learning.

Furthermore, there was an explicit acknowledgement from staff that it was important not to replicate pedological approaches used in mainstream settings. From this perspective, one reason that YP were unable to succeed in mainstream settings was that the pedological approaches were developed for whole-class teaching. Putwain et al. (2016) infer these approaches are not suited to YP who cannot regulate their learning and may have other additional needs. Like Trotman et al. (2019), the findings from this research suggested that APs fostered positive self-efficacy in learning by increasing confidence and sending positive and

encouraging messages to students. A limitation of Putwain et al. (2016) was school professionals requested some comments made by YP was removed from the data. School professionals perceived some of the comments were not representative of the views of those YP, as they acknowledged the emotional wellbeing of pupils fluctuated rapidly. Follow up interviews were not conducted with those YP.

Nonetheless in support of these findings Malcom (2019) proposed the reality and encouragement provided by staff helped develop confidence in learning. Flexibility in learning and personalising the curriculum to each learner's needs helped re-engagement and learning participation. Connecting personal interests to the curriculum was seen as more motivating to YP. However, the findings highlighted that some YP felt the learning happening in AP was not comparable to academic learning that transpires in mainstream schools. For example, completing exams to secure college places was a problem. In response to this Malcolm (2019) recommends quality assuring and monitoring APs to ensure they provide the qualification required to access further training, education, or employment post-16.

2.5.4 Managing Needs or 'Behaviour'

Gazeley (2010) proposes how 'bad behaviour' is sometimes constructed as a choice can often limit the educational entitlement (e.g., access to support and intervention) and further complicates the issues. Furthermore, Brown (2018) emphasizes the lack of understanding of behaviour and what underpins this is a cause for concern in both school and AP.

Similarly, McCluskey et al. (2012) research also emphasised the concerns for 'behaviour management' in mainstream schools and APs. Despite this the research findings also proposes that YP and parents perceived APs to be dedicated to supporting 'challenging behaviour' and avoiding permanent exclusions. YP perceived that they felt valued as they were given the time to talk and were listened to; they explicitly appreciated the non-judgemental attitudes of staff but respected the set boundaries. Professionals acknowledged that the lack of early intervention and preventative work, alongside punitive behaviour management approaches, isolates vulnerable YP.

Interestingly, Thomas and Pennacchia's (2016) findings highlighted that both YP and their families might be pathologised through the AP process. The authors noted hearing YP often being referred to as a category as if this was their identity:

"there's one of our ESBDs"

(Thomas and Pennacchia 2016, P8).

However, YP perceived that AP had provided them with an opportunity to become someone different. The research also proposed that like mainstream schools, behaviourist psychological approaches were still being used to manage behaviour (e.g., rewards and punishments). Whilst there was some use of various therapies, these too were framed by behaviourism. This approach is criticised as relying heavily on extrinsic measures and fails to foster the necessary intrinsic self-discipline (Kohn, 1999).

The findings from the following studies highlights the uniqueness in individual experiences of AP in relation to 'behaviour'. Research also emphasises the perception around behaviour impacts how behaviour is understood and managed (Trotman et al., 2015). Trotman et al. (2015) used semi-structured interviews with behaviour co-ordinators, pupils and two head teachers of AP to explore how behaviour of those at risk of exclusion and attending AP is perceived. Perceptions suggested 'badly managed' key transitions[6] were a significant contributory factor in 'challenging' behaviour'. Professionals perceived this was exacerbated further for YP who had SEN.

The research findings also proposed professionals failed to understand underlining causes of presenting behaviour. In addition, perceptions around behaviour were also linked to relationships with teaching staff and the pedological approaches. The researchers noted the importance of sustaining high quality and enduring human connections but emphasized the challenges within a classroom setting to achieve this. Behaviour co-ordinators recognised the need for a holistic approach through a robust pastoral system. Despite this recognition, the approach to managing behaviour was mixed in schools. Some schools offered therapeutic intervention whilst others had YP in 'behaviour rooms' sat facing a wall under the assumption that the YP needed to 'cool down' or that the teacher needed respite. A limitation of this study is there was limited shared perceptions from the two headteachers at AP who participated in this study. Furthermore, the researchers did not critically examine their own role and

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[6] Key transition was referred to as Key stage 3 (move to secondary school from primary) Key Stage 4 (last two years of secondary school).

potential biases during data analysis despite being commissioned by the consortium of schools to complete this research.

More recently Trotman's et al. (2019) research implied that the use of AP is complex. The complexity of the needs of some YP and schools being unable to manage behaviour due to the multifaceted socio-political context has resulted in the increased use of AP. Trotman et al. (2019) conducted evaluative case studies over a six-year period in 3 LAs using progressive focusing. Several approaches were used to gain the perceptions of key stakeholders, Parents and YP (e.g., face to face semi-structured interviews, telephone interview, and surveys). Documentary sources were also analysed. The researchers intended to explore how YP ended up attending AP. The research revealed that concerns were shared amongst key stakeholders over the range of complex needs amongst YP, that mainstream schools and APs were now obliged to address. Findings also highlighted that the lack of early identification and intervention causes a downward 'spiral' into some of the presenting behaviours. Again, the behaviour was magnified when the emotional effects of essential transitions were inadequately managed. A limitation of Trotman et al. (2019) is that telephone interviews were used with parents and YP who were not attending school. It has been noted that telephone interviews can be difficult to establish a rapport (Braun & Clarke 2013). Subsequently it is questionable how researchers built a rapport with families and YP who have likely withdrawn from the education system. It is also more challenging to notice the subtleties in body language that can help inform the interview. Equally some participants may have felt more comfortable sharing their view in their safe space.

2.5.5 Financial implications

The literature explored the financial implications of using AP; it can be costly (Taylor 2012, Bryant et al., 2018). Subsequently, this can impact whether AP is used and which one to select (Taylor, 2012). Danechi (2019) proposes that the average yearly cost for one young person at an AP is £17,000- £18,000. Taylor's (2012) report highlights evidence that some schools or LAs were drawn to cheaper provisions and that this was one of the main drivers for commissioning provision rather than quality. In some cases, schools paid well below the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) for vulnerable students, whom they could not keep in school with considerably more resources and money. Taylor's review also highlighted AP providers preferred arrangements, whereby commissioners block-bought places for the academic year as this helped to

retain experienced staff and plan. Where placements are 'spot-funded', this made it more challenging to sustain the quality of provision. Given these findings of cost vs quality, it is questionable where do YPs' needs fit within this? Is the decision-making impacted by the young person's best interest, or by the finances made available through schools or LAs? More recently research proposes that the finances can be a hinderance to accessing the correct provision for YP and can limit schools' choices (Brown, 2018).

2.6. The "'Referral process'"
2.6.1 Fair Access Panel
There are numerous ways in which a young person can be referred to AP, this is also different in different LAs. If a young person is permanently excluded from school, the LA is responsible for finding them a placement. Schools can commission their own APs for YP at risk of permanent exclusion (DfE, 2013). However, each LA has its own protocols, which may affect the referral process. For example, every LA must have a Fair Access Panel (FAP), which must be developed in partnership with the school. FAP is designed to ensure YP are found a suitable placement quickly; this includes YP at risk of permanent school exclusion.

Trotman et al. (2019) suggest a lack of research on how YP arrive in APs; there is also limited information about how key professionals make these decisions. Much of the literature focuses on experiences of APs, re-integration and transitioning from AP. There is also limited literature exploring the processes which some LAs might use to place YP in APs in England (Trotman et al., 2019). There is also no agreement nationally in the referral process (McCluskey et al., 2015) and the evidence underpinning the referral process to AP is relatively weak (Mills & Thomson, 2018). As outlined so far, much of the literature focuses on the perceived good or poor practice and factors for consideration.

2.6.2 How effective is FAP?
The inquiry led by the House of Commons Education Committee (2018) suggested that there is a significant variation in how these panels are managed and how well they work. Rowe (2019) explored the use of the FAP protocols in one LA to facilitate a school 'swap' as an alternative to school exclusion. Her thesis highlighted that an independent consultant indicated that too few schools provided accessible and clear information on pupil learning, social and emotional wellbeing. There was also little evidence regarding the plan do and review process as stated in the SEND Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015) and that FAP referrals rarely include

input from the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo). Parents and YPs' views were also not considered in the FAP referral process. Rowe (2019) used a narrative approach and interviewed a young person, their parent and a professional from the 'swap' school to explore views around FAP and the school swap. The findings from this research implied that the young person felt powerless in the referral process. Furthermore, the parent was not involved in the decision making, she felt 'lied' to by the school and 'let down' by professionals through the FAP. The findings also highlighted that there was a lack of understanding around the FAP. Collaboration, communication, and partnerships between professionals was also lacking. Furthermore, delays in the process meant the young person was missing education for an extended period. Interestingly, the professional suggested that FAP was an 'intervention' before 'justifying' a permanent exclusion, suggesting the 'swap' serves as a respite for schools. Overall, the process was described as setting the YP 'to fail', with panel not always having a full understanding of the YP's needs. In contrast the professional from the school shared the factors which she perceived can support the process. These were empathy towards family and young person, understanding the situation from a holistic perspective and building trusting relationships with families.

In addition, Rowe (2019) findings emphasised intervention and involvement from the Educational Psychologist team needed to be evidence by school before the case could be seen by FAP. She reflected that this change in the FAP protocols saw an increase in the number of permanent exclusions within the LA. Thus, suggesting the access to the EP service was challenging. This was also attributed to the lack of staff knowledge on SEN, knowledge on the SEND Code of Practice and the pressure of wider systems on schools e.g., policy, funding etc. A limitation of this study is it did not include the perspective of professionals from the young person's previous school or the perspective of the LA professionals. Multiple perspectives would add value to the richness of understanding these processes.

Furthermore, communication between teachers, schools, LAs and APs is a significant issue in the referral process (Rowe, 2019). Thomson & Pennacchia (2016) highlighted the lack of collaboration between schools and AP, including communication about YPs' progress.

2.6.3 AP Referral Processes
The research outlined in 2.6.2, is related to the referral procedure in managed moves (e.g., through FAP). There is very limited research which explores the AP referral process. Mills and

Thompson (2018) explored the referral process for using AP from the perspective of headteachers, AP providers, parents and YP using telephone interviews and case studies of 25 APs. The research aimed to explore the rationale behind the decision to refer and explore by what routes YP can be referred. APs highlighted that 'poor behaviour' was due to unidentified SEN needs, and that these were still not identified on referral. In addition to the YPs' needs, Mills & Thompson (2018) findings propose that referral to AP was dependent on the situation and individual. Referral was dependent on age of the young person, for example if in years 8/9 it was seen as a preventative and short-term measure. Whereas if the young person was in year 10/11 it was seen as a last resort and a long-term measure. Despite this many APs reported that they insisted that the YP remained on the school role to instil greater dual responsibility. The referral procedures varied from school to school, most referrals came through mainstream schools and the LA was directly not involved unless the young person was permanently excluded. However, in some cases all referrals would come through the LA. In these cases, the school would approach the LA who would then decide next steps.

A Limitation of Mills & Thompson's (2018) research was there was limited perspective from the LA surrounding their processes. Furthermore, the case studies presented provided limited information on the LA processes. Therefore, it is difficult to explore when these cases are presented to the LA, how are decisions made, who makes these decisions, what is working well in these processes and what needs to be further developed.

2.7 Educational Psychology
2.7.1 The role of Educational Psychologist
The Educational Psychologist (EP) role is best described by the core functions highlighted in research and practice. These five crucial functions are Assessment, Intervention, Consultation, Training and Research (Gibbs & Papps, 2017). The core functions support schools, families and YP in education with SEN and/or who are considered vulnerable. The implementation of each core function will be different as each LA and school will have its own needs and agendas (Lee & Woods, 2017). EPs also have a central role in the statutory assessment (EHCPs) for YP with SEND. The EP role means applying a psychological perspective to real-world problems, by uncovering possible mediating variables that might explain behaviours whilst using psychological problem-solving frameworks (Bagley and Hallam, 2017).

2.7.2 Educational Psychologist role in School Exclusions

Hampton and Ramoutar (2021) noted that EPs are noticing those with SEN or disadvantaged backgrounds losing access to learning for long periods, with identified and unidentified needs being unmet, increasing the risk of school exclusion. Hampton and Ramoutar (2021) focused their research on the use of 'low-level behaviour management systems' (LLBMs) in secondary schools to provoke discussion around how EPs can work effectively with school leaders in schools to reduce school exclusions. The research highlighted that most YP could identify a range of reasons why other YP may be disruptive. Sometimes they were sympathetic to the cause, commenting on personal characteristics, home factors or attributing behaviours to the quality of teaching. Interestingly pupils were generally positive about the LLBMs, which the researchers noted had gone against their preconceived notions and research. However, they reflected their views as EPs may be skewed as they tend to work with YP with SEN and often with complex backgrounds. A limitation of this research was that the teachers selected the YP to participate, it is possible that teachers chose 'less disruptive' YP. Due to ethics, researchers were not aware of student demographics, e.g., whether any pupils had SEN. Nonetheless, the researchers noted that school practices conflict with the psychological understanding of behaviour, its causes and potential ways to change it.

Swinson (2010) explored the EP role within a multidisciplinary team (e.g., advisory teachers). The research provides an account of a project undertaken to improve policy and practice within a school. This required ongoing consultations with staff, parents and YP. Following consultations, a new behavioural model was presented to schools, training and ongoing consultation were provided to support implementation. The findings highlighted that policy and practice changes resulted in better relationships between staff and pupil and between pupils and parents. It also reduced school exclusions and increased school attendance. The researcher acknowledges several systemic changes taking place in the school during the research. Therefore, the results cannot be solely attributed to the change in policy.

Nonetheless, the data suggest that parents, staff and YP perceived there to be a positive difference in the school environment. A factor for the success was the investment from all stakeholders, parents, staff, and pupils. A critique of this research is that the behaviour policy was underpinned by a behaviourist approach. However, the researcher felt that the increased

positive feedback was related to the change in staff approach rather than the intrinsic rewards that participants commented on. The researcher did not provide any quotes to substantiate these claims. More recently, research has emphasized the importance of relational aspects of schooling from the individual level to the systems and culture to help support those at risk of exclusion (Griffiths, 2020). Maxwell (2013) reported the positive role of EP in group supervision consultations and Rechten & Tweed (2014) place emphasis on supporting school with the implementation of evidence-based interventions. In addition, Tilson and Oxley (2020) believe that EPs can play a valuable role in drawing up guidance on the use of exclusion in schools. The research presented highlights the vital role EP's can contribute in mainstream settings to reduce school exclusions and subsequent use of AP.

2.7.3 Educational Psychologist role in Alternative Provisions
There is limited research that explores the role of EPs in AP and the referral process. Bryson (2010) proposes

"Exclusion *from mainstream school disadvantages YP by placing them outside the institutional arrangement for the containment, care and development*."

(p349).

Bryson (2010) suggests that exclusion from mainstream schools subsequently results in limited access to resources and services, which increases the risk of poor outcomes for YP. Furthermore, Trotman et al. (2019) evaluation data from the perspective of key stakeholders suggested there was an emphasis on multi-agency working, EPs were regarded by participants as essential. However, a participant reflected that engaging and sustaining multi-agency work was challenging. This participant saw the school taking on the role of these other professionals. Despite this, the researchers' findings highlighted a desire from all participants to provide multi-agency professional support and care to some of the most vulnerable YP.

Bagley & Hallam (2017) explored the EP's role in facilitating 'managed moves' from the perspective of schools, EPs and LA professionals. Their findings highlighted that school staff and LA professionals were often unsure about the current role of the EPs. Participants' perceptions indicated they saw the EP role as supporting 'learning' and not 'behaviour'. The research also highlighted the variability in schools, including how they use the EP to support during 'managed moves'. In cases where the EP was involved, they would be used to support the

young person or family. This was only if the YP/families were already known to the EP. Furthermore, professionals only requested EP involvement when the situation had reached a crisis point. For example, when a managed move was failing, the EP was then asked to complete some assessments.

Furthermore, LA professionals suggested that schools should become more proactive rather than reactive and emphasised the need for the EP to play a 'statutory role' in 'managed moves'. Interestingly one LA professional noted that they felt involving the EP was a 'tick box exercise' where the school could use the EP as evidence to 'add weight' to the school's referral. School professionals suggested that some school staff lacked the requisite skills to identify needs and implement interventions. Participants expressed several critical areas in which they felt EPs should be involved, such as managed moves, transitions, preventative work and assessment of needs. Interestingly participants valued the holistic and systemic thinking that EPs can provide to encourage others to think about the situation differently. A limitation of the research was it targeted EPs facilitating managed moves rather than supporting the referral process and AP use. Nonetheless, this research highlights potential areas for development in working with LAs, schools and those at risk of permanent school exclusion, shaping the EP role in the AP context.

Brown (2018) explored the role of the EP in the AP context considering social inclusion. Participants' perception indicated the role of the EP was invaluable and needed in the use of AP. The knowledge of EPs was seen to support staff to consider different approaches. Furthermore consultation, direct casework and systemic work in settings was seen as desired work from EPs. The perceptions suggested that EPs were fundamental in assisting both school and AP to understand and support complex needs. Finally, the EP role was viewed as valuable in supporting both the theory and practice of social inclusion.

2.8 Rationale

A wealth of research explores the perceived good or poor practices in AP and the essential factors for consideration when using APs. (McCluskey et al., 2015; Thomas & Pennacchia, 2016; Putwain et al., 2016; Malcolm, 2019). However, there is limited research exploring the decision-making processes surrounding the access of AP for those at risk of permanent exclusion. In addition, there is limited research exploring the 'referral processes' and from the perspective of the LA (Mills and Thompson 2018). How do these processes work, is the

process perceived as effective, how are decisions made and how can these processes be improved to ensure the best outcome for YP? In addition, studies rarely include direct observations and evaluations of these 'referral processes'. Given the growing use of referral to AP with YP, who are often described as the most vulnerable in the country (Danechi, 2019), it is imperative that referral approaches are researched and evaluated to continue to develop and support effective practice. The literature also revealed the limited research around the role of the EP in supporting schools, APs and the LA in this context. The research and data also suggest that secondary schools continue to use APs more than primary. For example, 66% were between the ages of 14-15 (Danechi, 2019). Therefore, the focus of this research will be surrounding the use of AP in secondary education.

2.9 Psychological Theory

This part of the chapter will explore the psychological theories that underpins the research. Several psychological theories highlight the value of exploring the systems around the YP regarding preventing permanent school exclusions using AP. In this study, the relationships and interactions between the systems and their impact on YP are of interest. Furthermore, the literature reviewed suggests that the systems and environmental factors around the young person may be excluding the young person from participating in mainstream education. Given this, I perceived the following theories most relevant to this study: the Eco-systemic perspective (Bronfenbrenner 1979) and The Social Model of Disability (Oliver, 2004).

2.9.1 The Ecological Theory

2.9.1.1 The model

Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1986) Ecological theory (also referred to as Eco-systemic theory) outlines how individuals operate within a complex, multifaceted system and how the development of YP relies on the inter-relational connection between the immediate systems and the surrounding systems. There are different iterations of the eco-systemic model, the model proposed by Bronfenbrenner in 1986 has been chosen in this thesis due to its recognition of the importance of the transitions in a young person's life ('chronosystem'). The 1979 model proposed by Bronfenbrenner does discuss ecological transition, however, this is discussed in relation to the other systems, whilst the latter model provides a separate system for all transitions. The transition to AP from school is an important and significant transition for YP and their families (McCluskey et al., 2015; Trotman et al, 2015; 2019), subsequently this model felt relevant given the nature of the topic.

The model is compared to 'Russian dolls', the young person is at the centre of the systems (the smallest doll), whilst the surrounding systems are nested in one another (figure 1) 'Microsystem' is the first system that directly contacts the young person, e.g., family, peers and school staff. The Mesosystem encompasses the interactions between the microsystems, such as the interaction between the young person's parent and school staff or between peers and siblings. YP may be affected by this system but do not necessarily participate in them. The 'Exosystem' incorporates other formal and informal structures that YP may not directly participate in but may impact the microsystems. For example, the Children's & Families Act (2014) or SEND Code of Practice (2015) may be considered as part of the 'Exosystem' (Atinkson & Rowley, 2019). The 'Macrosystem' focuses on the cultural elements impacting the young person's development, for example, the YP's socio-economic status and ethnicity. The fifth structure, also known as the 'chronosystem', encompasses all the environmental changes that occur over the young person's lifetime and influences their development, for example, significant transitions or life events (Atkinson & Rowley, 2019).
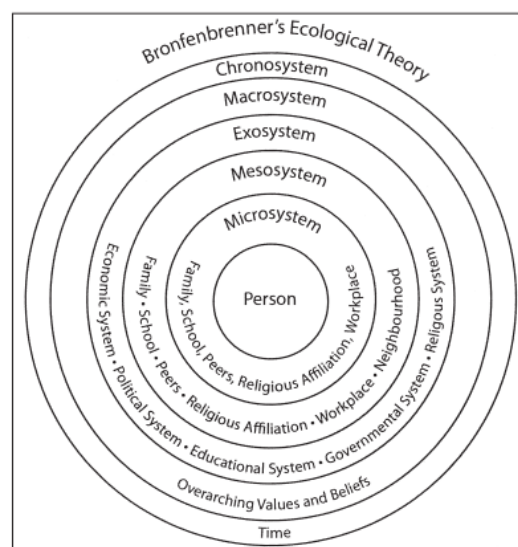
Figure 1: The Eco-systemic model.

(Bronfenbrenner 1986, adopted from Berger 2007).

2.9.1.2 Relevance to study
In recent decades, there has been a growing recognition that EPs should work systemically by working with the systems surrounding the young person (Wilding & Griffey, 2015; Buck 2015). The ontological perspective of the current research is a constructivist perspective, which as-

sumes that social discourses and experiences shape the acquisition of knowledge and concepts of reality (Crotty 1998; Lincoln et al., 2011). This contrasts with the 'within-child' or deficit model where problems are viewed as within YP (Cochran & Woolever, 1983) and EPs are seen as the assessors of needs and gatekeepers to access additional resources (Buck, 2015; Bagley & Hallam, 2017). The Ecology theory is relevant to this study as it provides a framework to consider the inter-relational systems influencing and impacting the young person's development, including when and why they attend AP. As explored in the literature review, the socio-political climate has impacted educational practice in both maintained schools and academies. Interactions within and between the systems will influence the practice and educational experiences of the young person.

2.9.2 The Social Model of Disability
2.9.2.1 The model
In the view of the Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS), it is society that disables physically impaired people. Disability is imposed on top of the individual's impairment(s), in the way in which they can be unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society (UPIAS, 1975). There is a clear distinction between two key elements, disability (social exclusion) and impairment (physical limitation). The disability is structural and public, whilst the impairment is individual and private. Disability is described as a social creation, a relationship with impairment and disabling society (Oliver 2004). Oliver (2004) proposes that the social model approach requires removing barriers and responses to social oppression. More recently, in a review of this model and responding to criticism, Oliver (2013) suggests this model is a tool to improve the lives of individuals, it was not intended to solve all problems around disability.

2.9.2.2 The relevance to the study
The social model of disability is relevant to this research, as it provides a valuable approach to explore the possible ways in which systems within a young person's environment may be disenabling them to access a socially inclusive education. The research presented in the literature review suggests that the systems around the young person are inadvertently disenabling them and excluding them from receiving an education in a mainstream setting. The factors highlighted in the research that may contribute to this include: the socio-political climate, the school ethos and culture, school policy, availability of resources, relationships with adults,

unmet or unidentified needs and the curriculum. In contrast some legislation such as the children and families Act (2014) and the SEND Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015) can be viewed as promoting

to ensure they have access to an equal education and that their voice is at the forefront of decision making. Whereas other legislation can be perceived as undermining those same rights (DfE, 2013).

2.9.3 Summary

These psychological models demonstrate the importance of ensuring that practices used as an alternative to school exclusion (e.g., AP and how this is accessed) are done in the best interest of YP's education. The Eco-systemic model illustrates the importance of the inter-relational systems and the impact that these can have on YP's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In relation to this, the social model of disability proposes that society disenables the individual and not the impairment (Oliver 2004). From the literature review, it could be suggested that it is not the young person's needs that prevent them from accessing school in a mainstream setting but the systems in which they reside.

2.10 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the literature surrounding AP as a preventative approach to school exclusion. The literature review also explored the research surrounding the 'referral processes' and the role of the EP in this context. The research has been linked to the historical and socio-political context and, most importantly, the rights of the young person. The eco-systemic perspective and the social model of disability has also been shared. The next chapter will explore the methodological approach taken to answer the research aims and questions while considering the literature gap.

2.11 Research questions

Given the gap in the literature, the following research questions were developed:

1. How do key professionals view the use of APs as a preventative approach to school permanent exclusion?

2. What are professionals' perceptions of the AP Panel as an effective process for accessing AP?

3. How do key professionals think the AP panel could be further developed?

4. How do key professionals think EPs can support in this context to ensure the best outcomes for YP?

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the access and use of Alternative Provision (AP) as a preventative approach to those at risk of school permanent exclusion. The research also aims to explore the role of the EP in this context. To achieve the research aims, Illuminative Evaluation (IE) (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Jamieson et al., 1977; Burden, 2008) was selected due to its alignment with social constructivist approaches (Robson 2002 & Creswell & Creswell 2018) and recognition of the role of key professionals within multifaceted systems, which directly influences and affects the educational setting a young person could attend. This chapter will set out and justify the decisions taken in developing the methodological approach and method for this research.

This chapter will start with the ethical approval and considerations for this study, the rationale and the aims of the study will then be explicitly stated and considered; this will include the research questions. The chapter will then critically consider the philosophical approach underpinning the methodological approach of the research (social constructivism) and the interpretive stance taken when analysing the data. The historical origins of IE, rationale for its use within this study and alternative methodology is then discussed. This is followed by an explanation of how IE has been applied in this research and a critique of IE as an approach. Generalizability and quality criteria within this research are shared, followed by a summary of the chapter.

3.2 Ethical Approval & Considerations

An application for ethical approval was submitted to the University of Bristol, School of Policy Studies, in March 2020. Following some amendments, ethical approval was granted in May 2020 by the Ethics Committee (Appendix 3). This part of the chapter will explore several ethical considerations in the early planning stages of this research.

As will be discussed, the underlying principle of IE is that this approach is 'client-centred' and non-judgmental. In relation to this research, IE aims to improve practices of accessing and using Alternative Provision (AP) as a preventative approach to school exclusion. However, the terminology of 'evaluation' might mean that professionals may feel that their actions are being judged or result in a feeling of discomfort (Cooper, 2019). Within the education system,

there are many protocols to explore the effectiveness of services (e.g., Ofsted) and the negative experiences of such 'evaluations' on professionals have been well documented (Hopkins et al., 2016). Furthermore, an ethical consideration includes the risk of 'participant bias' (Robson, 2002), as professionals feel the need to portray an ideal picture of the 'program initiative'. The 'program initiative' refers to an intervention that an educational setting has adopted to bring about change or a specific desired outcome. The 'program initiative' is explored in more detail in relation to this study in 3.8.

To minimise the risk to participants and the impact on the research, the purpose of the methodological approach was explained to all participants, both verbally and in a written format (Appendix 4). At the start of interviews, participants were reassured that the purpose of the research was to illuminate and not judge the practice of any professionals. Participants were also informed that there were no right or wrong answers, and that the purpose was to explore experiences and perceptions of APs and the Alternative Provision Panel (AP Panel). Furthermore, participants were reminded of the confidentiality protocol and were reassured that their views and comments would remain anonymous; limits of this were also discussed. Information shared in interviews could be redacted at a later stage following checking of transcripts by participants themselves. No names were recorded, and each participant was given a pseudo name. Following the BPS (2018) Code of Ethics & Conduct, and the BERA (2018) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, informed consent was obtained from all participants; this includes their rights to withdraw, and the limitations of this once data had been transcribed and made anonymous.

As I was on placement in the Local Authority (LA), it was vital that I made my role as a researcher clear and that this was separate from my role as a Trainee Educational Psychologist. The purpose of this was to reduce the potential power imbalance, unintentionally created by the EP role, and to help participants feel comfortable to share their views without the feeling of judgment. During interviews, some participants referred to my role as a 'psychologist' rather than a researcher. Being aware of the power dynamic between interviewee and interviewer, unintentionally created by my role, a research diary was used for reflections and peer and professional supervision (appendix 14). Keeping a research diary also supported the quality criteria of this qualitative research (Tracy 2010).

3.3 Rationale & Aims

3.3.1 Rationale

As highlighted in chapter 2, there is a gap in the literature surrounding the limited research into how Young People (YP) arrive in APs (Trotman et al., 2019) and, more importantly, the LA's 'referral processes' (Mills & Thompson, 2018). In addition, much of the literature focuses on the good or poor practices within APs with a limited perspective from the LA. Equally, there is limited research exploring the role of Educational Psychologists (EPs) facilitating this.

Recently the LA has set up a new initiative known as the AP Panel to monitor and govern the use of funded AP places. The AP Panel is attended by LA professionals and external agencies, e.g., the police. Case referrals are made to the Panel, Panel members will deliberate on the case and subsequently decide whether the LA will fund placement at an AP. The AP Panel may also discuss which provision they feel might be best for that young person or suggest that the caseworker explores various options. They may also refer the case back to the school with suggestions of other interventions that need to be tried first. Currently, the AP Panel is open to secondary schools only, for YP between the ages of 13-16 (Key Stage 4).

Given the growing use of referral to AP for some of the YP who are described as the most vulnerable in the country (McCluskey et al., 2015; Pennacchia & Thompson 2016) and the limited research into the 'referral process', it is essential that research explores how these processes work, what is working and what needs to be developed.

3.3.2 Aims

The current research aims to illuminate how AP supports YP at risk of school permanent exclusion in secondary school. The research also aims to explore perceptions of accessing AP through the AP Panel and the role of the EP within this context. By completing initial observations of the AP Panel, documentary analysis and interviews with key professionals involved, it is hoped that strengths and potential areas for development will be identified. The information obtained throughout this research will support the development of future policies and practices.

3.3.3 Research Questions

Given the aims of the study, the following research questions were developed:

1. How do key professionals view the use of AP as a preventative approach to school permanent exclusion?

2. What are professionals' perceptions of the AP Panel as an effective process for accessing AP?

3. How do key professionals think that AP panel could be further developed?

4. How do key professionals think EPs can support in this context to ensure the best outcomes for YP?

3.4 Philosophical approach

Bryman (2016) indicates that several factors influence social research; these factors inform the approach taken towards research design. These factors include theory, practical considerations, epistemology, ontology, and values. There is an emphasis for these variables to be carefully considered by the researcher. For example, what are the researchers' values, skills, or experiences of the researched topic? What is the nature of the topic being studied, and who is the study for? (Newby 2010). Most importantly, the researcher must be clear and identify their own epistemological & ontological beliefs (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Newby (2010) highlights the necessity for researchers to explicitly state the underlying assumptions influencing and informing their research, as this allows research methods to be evaluated and critiqued.

Ontology is interested in the nature of social entities or realities. More specifically, ontological perspectives are concerned with:

"Whether or not there is a social reality that exists independently of human conceptions and interpretations and closely related to this, whether there is shared reality or only multiple, context-specific ones"

(Ritchie et al., 2013 p4).

Similarly, Bryman (2016) suggests that central to this is the belief that social entities should be either considered as 'objective' entities that have a reality external to 'social actors' (p28) or that reality is a social construction built from the actions and perceptions of social actors. 'Positivist' or 'post-positivist' share the belief that reality is objective. Therefore, this approach seeks to measure variables against one another, recognising causal effects between variables and prove or disapprove theory (Phillips et al., 2000; Robson 2002; Creswell and Creswell

2018). In contrast to this, 'relativism' and 'social constructivism' believe that reality is subjective. It is socially constructed through people making meaning from their experiences and the language used to provide a narrative of those experiences. It is influenced by cultural, political, and historical contexts (Crotty 1998; Lincoln et al.,2011).

Epistemology is concerned with

"…how we understand and research the world"

(Cohen et al., 2013, p27).

Similarly, Cohen et al. (2013) and Bryman (2016) identify two broad paradigms within epistemology such as interpretivist and positivist. Firstly, the positivist approach aligns itself with quantitative methods with the ontological perspective that reality is objective, and the objective researcher is a measurer of that reality (Hennink et al., 2020). Quantitative methods generally utilise large-scale samples, questions, numerical measurements, and surveys. A clear distinction is drawn between research and theory. Hence the role of research is to test theory and to determine and develop a law that can be generalised to other populations (Bryman 2016; Robson 2002).

The interpretivist approach aligns with a qualitative approach to social research (Bryman 2016). This approach was developed from the views of writers such as Immanuel Kant (Smith 2011) and William Dilthey (Dilthey 2010), who critiqued the application of the 'scientific' approach to exploring social research (Ritchie et al., 2013). These writers emphasised the importance of 'understanding' people's lived experiences in different socio-political, cultural, and historical contexts. More specifically, the researcher's role is to interpret the experiences and narratives shared by participants, recognising the multiple realities whilst acknowledging their influence and subjectivity. By undertaking this, the researcher socially constructs meaning from the experiences shared and 'induces' an understanding (Ritchie et al., 2013; Creswell & Creswell 2018). Qualitative methods generally employ smaller sample sizes and include semi-structured interviews, analysis of documents, and observations (Robson 2002). Qualitative approaches align with the aims of this research study.

The ontological and epistemological perspective of the current qualitative study is constructive and interpretative. The research seeks to understand and explore the multiple realities

and constructs of the key professionals as they experience the access and use of AP as a preventative approach to school exclusion. The rationale for this approach is that participants' experiences will be interpreted within the socio-political environment whilst acknowledging my subjectivity.

3.5 Illuminative Evaluation
3.5.1 Historical Origins
Illuminative Evaluation (IE) stemmed and evolved from acknowledging that traditional methods of evaluating and assessing the effectiveness of innovations did not answer important research questions in educational settings. For example, why an intervention achieved better results in one group than another group (Burden, 2008). 'Innovation' is the terminology that is used to describe an intervention or a program initiative that an educational setting has adopted to bring about change or a specific desired outcome. It is used interchangeably with terms such as 'program', 'program initiative', 'curricula' and 'intervention' within the literature of IE (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Parlett, 1972; Jamieson et al., 1977; Burden, 2008). It will be referred to as a 'program initiative' in this chapter for ease of reading. Concerning this study, the use of APs and the AP Panel is the 'program initiative', with the desired outcome of preventing permanent school exclusion and creating successful outcomes for YP.

Parlett and Hamilton (1972) suggested that with the growing array of program initiatives within education,

"to aid the decision-making - innovation has been joined by evaluation"

(p3).

Evaluation became an integral part of program initiatives, with Government officials placing increasing demands on research to provide evidence for program initiatives to support the decision making within numerous agendas and limited budgets (Stake 1972). Predominantly, program initiatives were evaluated using positivist and qualitative approaches, psychometric testing, randomised control trials and other experimental designs (Jamieson et al., 1977; Burden, 2008). Parlett and Hamilton (1972) describe this dominant approach as the

"Classical or agricultural-botany paradigm, which utilises a hypothetico-deductive methodology derived from the experimental and mental testing in psychology"

(p4-5).

In the 'agricultural-botany paradigm', participants are viewed as plant crops, who are subjected to varying experimental conditions where variables are "codified" (controlled), and then subsequently measured for indications of "attainment" or "growth". The data derived from this approach is 'objective' numerical data that permits statistical analysis. Subsequently, program initiatives are judged according to the statistical performance and improvement seen in the program initiative's ability to meet the desired outcomes. In such approaches, the researcher may think about 'factors' and 'parameters' rather than 'institutions' and 'individuals'. Parlett (1972) and Parlett and Hamilton (1974) indicate that this paradigm is problematic. Firstly, they suggest that this type of study "divorces" from the real world and paints an artificial picture. Vitally, it does not consider the multiple nuanced variables which impact the uptake, implementation, and response to a program initiative. Instead, it assumes that there is a measurable 'objective-truth' that all participants experience.

Jamieson et al., (1977) outline how educational institutions are unique and exist within their context and set of circumstances. For example, students are not passive in receiving a program initiative. Professionals in educational settings will adapt the program initiative based on their own experiences, skills, values, and beliefs, whilst senior professionals will disseminate it within the context of local and national agendas. Subsequently, this approach does not consider how the elements of a program initiatives are omitted and embedded either consciously or subconsciously by the participants. Therefore, Parlett & Hamilton (1974) highlight that an 'agricultural' approach runs the risk of neglecting vital data, which may be more salient to the program initiative, but will be disregarded as being 'anecdotal', 'impressionistic' and 'subjective'.

Furthermore, one could argue that when changes to the program initiative do occur, the evaluation loses its validity as it is no longer a measure of the original initiative it was intended to evaluate. In addition, the requirement for such evaluation requires a sizeable random sample and strict control, making it costly in both resources and time (Burden, 2008). Burden (2008) also implies that finding the proper control groups of individuals is impossible and is fraught with ethical tension as some will receive the program initiative whilst others will not.

3.4.2 Illuminative Evaluation: An Educational Psychology Approach
Following some of the concerns outlined, a group of educational evaluators gathered at Churchill college in 1972 to discuss and explore 'non-traditional' models of evaluation and to

set out guidelines for future developments (MacDonald and Parlett, 1973; Elton and Laurillard, 1997). They devised a new and different approach, IE. Their introduction of IE was a reaction to the concerns of traditional approaches and an early post-positivist attempt to explore the holistic nature of educational settings and program initiatives from the perspectives of all those involved or invested (Burden, 2008). They argued that a program initiative's rationale, implementation, progress, and challenges should all be explored within the context in which they occurred.

This approach is described as a form of 'social anthropology'; however, it is not meant to imply a close identity with anthropological theory and method:

"The connection with anthropology is through the emphasis on interpreting; on building up an explanatory model of existing practice; on drawing out patterns of coherence and interconnectedness that otherwise go unnoticed"

(Jamieson et al, 1997, p227).

Similar to an anthropologist, Illuminative researchers immerse themselves in the contexts of those they are researching; ultimately, they seek to build a picture of the program initiative in question, looking for relationships between practice and beliefs. Subsequently, the product of this type of research is not a set of findings or a catalogue of facts. It is a descriptive and interpretative commentary on a series of educational issues and phenomena prudently documented (Jamieson et al., 1977).

Two main concepts underpin IE, the 'instructional system' and the 'learning milieu' (Parlett and Hamilton, 1977; Burden, 2008). The 'instructional system' refers to how the program initiative is transmitted to the current system. Rather than determining whether a program initiative has met its set of objectives, IE aims to explore how it is embedded within the context. The program initiative and its underlining principles may remain the same wherever it is applied. However, variations will inevitably occur in how it is implemented; it will be unique and different in each context (Burden 2008).

The 'learning milieu' is "the social-psychological and material environment" (Parlett and Hamilton, 1977, p 13) in which participants work together. It represents a network of social, cultural, institutional, and psychological variables. IE seeks to study and explore the knock-on

effect which any change to a system creates. For example, there will be financial or administrative constraints within any context, individual characteristic (e.g., belief, values, motivation, perspectives, ambitions), and practical considerations. Parlett and Hamilton (1977) and Burden (2008) stated that it is difficult to separate the impact of 'learning milieu' from the 'program initiative'.

Finally, the most salient feature of IE is that it is intended to be 'client centred'. The researcher's responsibility is to concentrate on the clients and to include diverse groups, from the policymakers or innovators to the initiative's participants. Using a traditional approach, professionals are requested to make judgements and changes based on research that does not necessarily provide details of the complexities of implementing a program initiative. However, IE offers a clear description of how the initiative has been embedded and its impact on the setting. Subsequently, the research findings will reflect the most salient issues to the stakeholders and illuminate areas for future development.

3.6 Rationale

IE was nominated as the methodological approach for this research, as its ethos and underpinnings aligned with the research aims, rationale and philosophical approach of the current research. It was also felt that this approach would address some of the dilemmas within educational psychology and provide a unique contribution to developing practice within the profession.

As previously discussed, there was a continued pressure for scientific methods to answer social-psychological questions (Parlett & Hamilton, 1972; Parlett, 1974; Jamieson et al., 1977). Within the profession, it was documented that educational psychology would only achieve academic respectability and acceptance by demonstrating their credentials as scientific practitioners by using experimental research (Burden, 2008). This positivist approach has been criticised for failing to answer the dilemmas faced by education systems and EPs in practice (Fredrickson, 2002). Fredrickson (2002) highlighted the lack of efficacy of randomised control trials (RCTs) to represent real-life practice and all populations. Furthermore, Fox (2011) implies that RCTs should not be considered the only method for developing an evidence-based profession, as one size does not fit all. Schiff (2017) proposes the pressure to produce findings generalised to the broader population as they hold 'validity' and 'reliability, subsequently increasing the likelihood of using positivist approaches. However, as stated earlier, these types

of research do not answer the questions that support developing an authentic social-psycho-logical understanding. To move the profession and psychological research on, Schiff (2017) suggests that approaches that explore experiences and the mean-making of those experiences provide a more in-depth understanding required for the profession. IE seeks to explore the situation as they exist and is based on reality. Based on this, IE presented as a relevant methodological approach to use in this research.

3.7 Alternative Methodology

When exploring the methodological approach for this research, an alternative methodology was considered based on the research aims, rationale, epistemological and ontological positions. Subsequently, Action Research was an alternative approach that was considered. Action Research is a prominent methodological approach that has been utilised in research surrounding educational evaluation (Robson, 2002; Stringer, 2008). It is described as a collaborative process between the researcher and a social setting in diagnosing a problem and developing a solution (Bryman, 2016). Central to action research is 'improvement' and 'involvement' (Robson 2002).

"There is first, the improvement of a practice of some kind; second the improvement of understanding of a practice by its practitioners; and third the improvement of the situation in which practice takes place"

(Robson, 2002, p215)

Subsequently, this relies on the researcher and participants working together to identify issues that require exploration, collaboratively planning next steps and methods, sharing responsibility for collecting data and working together to find solutions. (Hennink et al., 2020). Fundamentally action research presents itself as a cyclical approach, e.g., planning change, acting on that change, observing and reflecting upon that change and then planning further changes, thus repeating the cycle (Robson, 2002; Johnson, 2008). Whilst Action Research also adopts a constructivist approach and is client-centred, it was felt that this approach was not applicable or suitable for this research. The first reason for this was that the time frame for this research did not allow for a complete cyclical approach required for Action Research, e.g., action- evaluation-action. Furthermore, Action Research is a participatory approach, where collaboration between participants and research is ongoing throughout the research, e.g.,

participants take on a role as the researcher (Johnson, 2008; Hennink et al., 2020), this was not the case with this research.

3.8 Illuminative Evaluation & The Current Research
This section will outline and provide an explanation of IE in relation to this current study. For clarity, this will be structured following the five stages of IE (Parlett, 1974). It will include a description of the setting and rationales for the choice of method at each stage. The explanation will begin with a description of 'the instructional system and 'the learning milieu" (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Burden, 2008).

3.8.1 "The Instructional system"
The instructional system of this research refers to the statutory guidance set out in the Children's and Families Act (2014) that all YP have the right to receive a suitable education. With the growing use of AP for YP at risk of permanent exclusion, the DfE (2013) provided statutory guidance for LAs to ensure that they receive a suitable full-time education. The current research explores the access and use of AP via the AP Panel, the 'program initiative'.

3.8.2 "The learning Milieu"
The context of the program initiative or the 'learning milieu' was Seabreeze; this is part of children services within the LA. Seabreeze is responsible for improving the education, learning, development, and wellbeing of all YP (ages 0-25), with a focus on those with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND), and those who are vulnerable. It is a multi-disciplinary service that provides assessment, consultation, intervention, training, advice and support for parents, carers, schools, and other educational settings. The service offers support for YP with a range of needs. It combines professional expertise from many different fields, e.g., Educational Psychologist, Sensory Support team, Specialist Advisory Teachers, Autism Team, Early Years Workers, the Fair Access and Exclusions Team and SEND team (caseworkers).

The LA is situated in the West Midlands and was chosen for this study for two reasons. Firstly, I am on placement within the Educational Psychology Service as a requirement for the Doctoral training in Educational Psychology. Secondly the LA was developing their policy and practice around using AP for vulnerable children as this was identified as an area for improvement. Ofsted inspection in 2016 of children services indicated that the service was "inadequate". However, the most recent inspection in 2019 indicated that children services had made sufficient improvement in the weaknesses outlined in the initial report.

The locality population is estimated at 327,378 people (ONS, 2018), with the region ranked 12th most deprived out of 317 LAs in England (IoD, 2019, Rank of Average Score). The locality is an ethnically diverse borough with a higher proportion of ethnic minority groups (Consensus 2011). Further socio-economic data from the Consensus in 2011 indicated that 35% of residence had no qualification, compared to 29% in the rest of the West Midlands and 23% in England and Wales.

3.8.3 Stages of IE and current research
3.8.3.1 Stage 1: 'Setting up the Evaluation'

The first stage is the negotiation stage whereby a 'contract' is agreed upon with the key stakeholder(s). The 'evaluator' sets to explore and clarify with key stakeholders, or those most concerned with the research outcomes, to outline what type of study is being commissioned. What is perceived to be the main concerns, what questions would they like answered, and their research expectations. The evaluator is responsible for ensuring there is clarity surrounding their role and the purpose of their involvement. The role is to explore, describe, illuminate practice, not to pass judgment on those in the study. It also requires the 'evaluator' to share the methods employed to collect the research data and the duration of the study, including timescales (Parlett 1974).

Stage 1 was completed across multiple meetings with the head of Seabreeze (Laura – pseudoname), who is responsible for the governance of APs in the LA and chairs the AP Panel. During the preliminary stages of the research, I met with Laura to share my interests within the research and to start exploring the current 'learning milieu' and the 'program initiative'. In keeping with the first stage of IE, I met with Laura at a later stage to outline the research and set up the initial 'contract' before receiving ethical consent. It was agreed that the research would seek to explore the use of AP as a preventative approach to permanent exclusion, and within this, explore the use of the AP Panel in this process.

Once ethical approval was obtained, I met with Laura to agree on the final 'contract' e.g., the research aims, methods and clear timeframes. Parlett & Hamilton (1972) imply the importance of not relying on one method in isolation but instead using a triangulation of methods to inform the findings. Within this broad range of methods, IE tends to rely on interviews and/or observations as primary sources complemented by documentary sources (Parlett &

Dearden, 1977). Given this, the agreed methods included observations of the AP Panel, documentary sources and interviews with key professionals.

3.8.3.2 Stage 2: 'Open-ended Exploration'

The second stage is an 'open-ended exploration'; it is described as the longest and most significant part of the research (Parlett, 1974). The 'evaluator' is required to familiarise themselves with the 'program initiatives' day-to-day reality. The purpose of this stage is for the evaluator to immerse themselves into the systems, actions and behaviours of the professionals most concerned with the 'program initiative'. The sole aim of this is to build a comprehensive picture of the 'program initiative' and to start to develop areas for further and more detailed exploration. Therefore, observation of the 'program initiative' may occur, generating field notes, the relevant professionals may be spoken with, and relevant documentation collected (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972). I intended to use observations and gathering of LA documentation as my method for this stage. Data from observations were difficult to obtain due to the events of Covid-19.

Before Covid-19 and receiving ethical approval, I observed the FAP once, and the AP Panel on two separate occasions. The purpose of the initial informal observations was in line with Parlett and Hamilton's (1972) approach to build a comprehensive picture of the program initiative. In support of this, I also spoke to several vital professionals around the context of the AP Panel. Both discussions with professionals and initial observations contributed to developing the topic guides for my focused inquiries (Stage 3 – interviews).

Observing Fair Access Panel (FAP) and the AP Panel as part of stage 2 helped identify the key populations of most significance to the research aims. These were:

1.   EPs who have been involved in the development in the use of APs or have cases that have resulted in AP placement via AP Panel.

2.   Local Authority Professionals who attend AP Panel.

3.   Alternative Provision Professionals who support YP referred by AP Panel or school.

4.   Secondary School Professionals who submit cases to AP Panel.

By including these key professionals, this would allow for multiple experiences and perspectives to be shared, enabling an increased understanding of accessing and using AP. The wider perspective also acknowledged the limitation in the literature reviewed.

Whilst initial observations informed the development of my specific research questions and topic guides used in the semi-structured interviews, constraints of Covid-19, time constraints and working as a sole researcher on a professional doctorate had led me to forego collecting data from observations for this study. It is acknowledged that observation data ('field-notes') would have likely provided additional valuable insight into the processes of the AP Panel and the decision making around AP placement, therefore providing a rigorous triangulation of findings. However, this is real-world research, flexibility has been required due to the current pandemic. This limitation of my research is discussed in the discussion chapter.

LA documentation was collected from professionals working in the LA. Documents were selected based on their significance to the research aims and discussion with Laura and other key professionals. The Local offer did not offer any useful information as much of this was outdated and no longer applicable. Documents gathered included (Appendix 9-11):

1. The AP directory

2. AP Quality Assurance Framework

3. AP Quality Assurance Process and Guidelines

The 'program Initiative'

Burden (2008) stated that it is difficult to separate the impact of the 'learning milieu' from the 'program initiative'. In this research, the program initiative refers to the 'referral process' in the LA used to fund AP to those at risk of school exclusion, also known as the AP Panel. This section of the chapter will provide an insight into the AP Panel.

The AP Panel was developed from the FAP. Professionals within the LA recognised the following issues surrounding the use of AP in the academic year 2018/19:

- No criteria for pupils requiring AP

- Lack of multi-agency support, not known to Seabreeze.

- Lack of transparency in decision making.

- Multiple routes to AP placements, e.g., children missing education team (CmE team), FAP, schools.

- Inappropriate placement of pupils from key stage 3, out of borough or with Educational Health Care Plans (EHCPs).

- Lack of quality assurance and monitoring of APs

- Increased spending in AP (table 2)

Table 2: The Number of YP in APs and the cost to the LA.

	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22
Number of pupils	62	94	330	349	221	61
Cost to LA	£136,195	£349,251	£2,054,601	£2,118,778	£1,180,965	£820,150

(The figures include those at risk of permanent exclusion, international new arrivals, and YP with medical needs missing education. The figures do not include those pupils with EHCPs or YP in LA commissioned AP)

To provide some further context, three panels within the LA may be used to place YP at risk of permanent exclusion at AP:
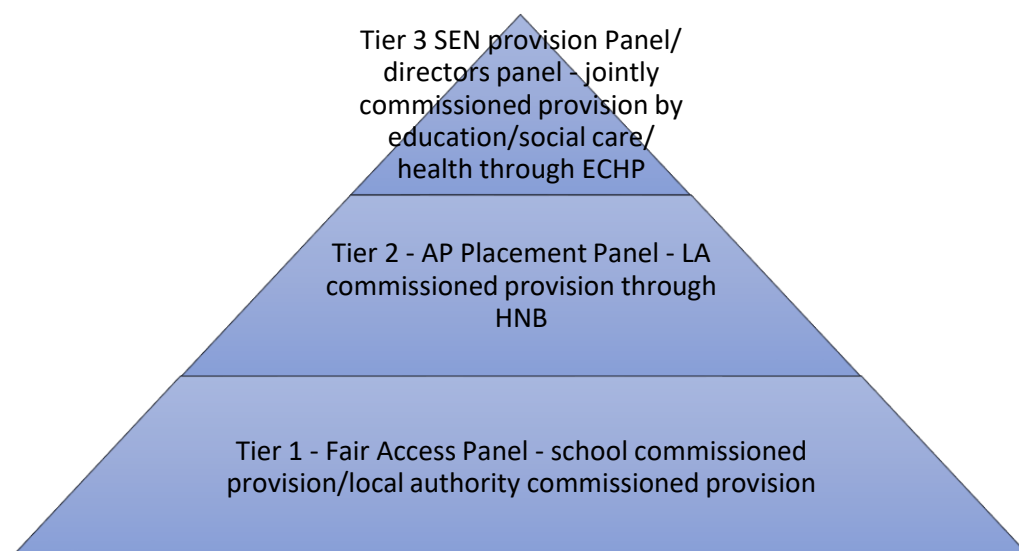
Figure 2: Tiers of Intervention and Support Commissioned through Panels

(Higher Needs Block– HNB).

Early observation of FAP (tier 1) suggested that this process was linked to managed moves rather than the commissioning of APs. Schools may commission their preventative place (up to 6 weeks) at a local authority commissioned AP at Tier 1. If this is successful, they are re-integrated back into mainstream school. If this is unsuccessful, the YP is referred to the AP Panel Tier 2 (figure 3). Tier 3 is used to allocate AP to those with EHCPs. The research was primarily concerned with the AP Panel (tier 2), as it appeared that this is where decisions were made around placing a young person in AP funded by the LA once schools had exhausted options available to them.

Signed parental consent

Fair Access Panel – provision that can be agreed: Managed transition, school paid LA subsidised preventative places at LA commissioned APs

On roll at school
- Dual reg

Success – re-integration / manged transition mainstream

Fair Access Decision - Paid / preventative (by school) into [TWO NAMED PROVISION] with parental consent

Failed (other incidents) – referral to AP panel

CmE Referral for pupils not on-roll at LA school / already in independent AP provision.

AP Panel

On-roll [NAMED PROVISION] – broker unregistered AP or training for part of the curriculum (2 days).

AP – who are a registered independent school.
- Single registration at independent school.
- Dual registration with mainstream school. AP panel provide additional funding to support school brokered placement. School fund first £6000

International New Arrivals needing SEND assessment place [NAMED TWO PROVISIONS] referral pathway for EHCP Needs Assessment

Complex CmE cases unsuitable for SCS

Figure 3: Routes into the AP Panel

YP referred to AP panel includes international new arrivals, those at risk of permanent exclusion and those with medical needs. The AP Panel will only consider YP in years 10 & 11, however in some circumstances YP in year 9 have been shared at the AP Panel. Seabreeze currently commissions three APs in the LA who are registered as AP free schools (appendix 1). Two of these APs are used as an assessment centre if the AP Panel has concerns regarding SEN. The AP Panel will also fund places at independent APs, a list is provided in the AP directorate (Appendix 9). These APs have been quality assured by the AP Panel.

3.8.3.3 Stage 3: "Focused enquiries"

Essentially, stage 2 informs stage 3 that the 'evaluator' uses experiences to spot similarities and differences between perspectives observed and note the issues and problems frequently raised (Parlett, 1974). This stage is focused on narrowing the investigations by completing an in-depth exploration of the areas highlighted as a problem. However, there is no sharp cut off between stages 2 and 3, as noted by Parlett and Hamilton (1972), as it may be necessary for the 'evaluator' to return to stage 2 to seek more information, to clarify their understanding, and further data collection in stage 3. Parlett (1974) identifies interviews with key stakeholders as the most appropriate method at this stage.

Semi-structured interviews were used in this current research as part of stage 3. The rationale for choosing semi-structured interviews rather than structured interviews was that it allowed for more freedom and opportunity to explore the topics raised by the interviewee (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Unlike structured interviews, it also allows flexibility in response to what is shared by interviewee (Bryman, 2016).

Subsequently, this allows the researcher to explore answers in greater detail and provides the opportunity to explore viewpoints and issues raised which may not have been anticipated. The rationale for choosing semi-structured interviews was also based on the approach aligning itself with both IE and the research's ontological assumptions. Parlett and Hamilton (1972) outline the purpose of stage 3 is to explore in-depth the themes emerging from stage 2. Semi-structured interviews following initial observations meant that open-ended questions could be used with interviewees to explore, in greater detail, their experiences and perception of APs, the use of AP Panel and the EP role. The flexibility of this approach allows the researcher to achieve what is intended for stage 3 of IE.

The most salient feature of IE is that the approach is "*client-centred*" (Jamieson et al., 1977, p228). The areas of interest to this research are the key professionals' experiences of using APs as a preventative approach to permanent exclusion and accessing this via the AP Panel. As the research is interested in the views of the key professionals ('client-centred'), this approach is congruent with the methodology, as interviews can be adapted to what is salient and meaningful to the interviewee. Finally, the research's ontological assumptions are constructivism. Semi-structured interviews permit the researcher to support the interviewee to construct their views and opinions while allowing space and checking for their meaning (Braun and Clarke, 2012; Bryman, 2016).

A limitation of this approach is that it has been noted to be both time consuming in conducting and analysing and is heavily reliant on the building of strong, positive rapport between interviewee and interviewer (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Furthermore, the researcher must be reflexive when using an approach such as semi-structured interviews. Reflexivity includes being aware, acknowledging and being transparent of their standpoint and biases that they may unintentionally bring to the interviews (Finlay 2002; Dodgson. 2019). A reflexive account of my role as a researcher is shared in the discussion chapter.

Interview topic guides (Appendix 7) were developed for each study population and based on the research questions. These questions were further developed following stage 2, initial observations, and critical discussions with professionals within the LA. Following stage 2, the wording of questions was adapted, and questions were added to the topic guides for each population.

Participants

A purposive sampling method was used to recruit participants. In this approach, the selection of participants is based on a set criteria (Ritchie et al., 2013). Participants are chosen because they have particular features or characteristics that will help explore and develop a detailed understanding of the research questions (Bryman, 2016). Stage 2 helped to identify the key populations of most significance to the aims of the research. Based on these criteria, a gatekeeper within the LA sent the research information and consent to potential participants from schools, the LA and APs. A gatekeeper was used within this research for ethical reasons, this

decision was also based on the existing relationship the gatekeeper had with potential partic-ipants. Research highlights the challenges with using a gatekeeper such as the gatekeeper deciding who gets to participate (Collings et al. 2016). To limit this challenge the gatekeeper was given clear criteria and was asked to forward research information to all professionals in schools, APs, and in the LAs who met these criteria. A further limitation of using a gatekeeper was delays, the gatekeeper required prompting to send an initial email and a follow up email.

I shared my research information and consent with the EPs at a virtual team meeting. Consent was obtained from 9 key professionals within the outlined criteria. I was unsuccessful in se-curing consent from key professionals in school; this may have been influenced by the nature of the pandemic and the school's capacity to spare time for research. Schools may have also been less willing to participate due to the concerns it might reflect critically on some schools. This limitation will be discussed in the discussion chapter.

Table 3: Participants and Pseudo Names

Professional Job Role	No. of participants	Pseudo Names
Educational Psychologists (EPs)	3	Sam, John, & Patricia
Professionals in the LA (LAPs)	4	Ella, Peter, Grace & Mary
Professionals in APs (APPs)	2	James & Layla

Given the research scale and to protect participant anonymity, I chose not to collect further demographic information from participants. Due to Covid-19, all interviews were held via Microsoft Teams, recordings were automatically stored on the University of Bristol's secure storage and deleted once transcribed. Transcripts were anonymised, and each participant was allocated a pseudo-name (Table 3). There are several limitations of using virtual inter-views, for example building a rapport, being able to notice the subtleties in body language and facial expressions, accessibility to some groups, loss of data due to technical difficulties with Wi-Fi (Braun & Clarke, 2013). To overcome some of the limitations, professionals had the opportunity to turn their camera on. All professionals chose to keep their cameras turned on, thus reducing the limitations outlined by Braun & Clarke (2013). Wi-Fi was connected di-rectly through an Ethernet cable to ensure that Wi-Fi did not interrupt the interviews. Partic-

ipants were asked to ensure they had suitable internet connection to avoid disruption. Despite potential limitations virtual interviews were more convenient for professionals and removed travel time and expense. Another advantage was that participants were able to discuss sensitive topics in a space they felt was confidential (Braun and Clarke 2013).

3.8.3.5 Stage 4: Interpretation
Stage 4 of IE sets out to

"clarify and interpret; in short illuminate"

(Parlett, 1974 p17).

It requires the researcher to systematically explore the data collected to provide an accurate, sensitive, and detailed report. Therefore, the researcher will explore all the data collected in stage 2 and the prominent themes that have emerged and clarified in stage 3. Parlett (1974) suggests that extensive description is merely not enough; a level of interpretation is essential to 'illuminate' and explain key findings, considering differing perspective and experiences collected from participants.

For the documentary sources, Content Analysis (CA) was used to examine the documentation (Robson 2002), the research questions influenced CA. Robson (2002) suggests that it is vital to first decide on a sample strategy using the documentation of interest. The documentation chosen was provided by professionals during stage 2. Based on the research questions, and the research method, they perceived these documents would be the most relevant. Robson (2002) then outlines the importance of *"defining the recording unit"* (p353); this refers to all the word occurrences. The 'recording units' of interest were 'Alternative provision', 'Alternative Provision Panel', 'referral', 'exclusion', 'Educational Psychologist' or an equivalent term. The software package NVivo was used to help code the data. Sentences containing the recording units were coded and analysed (Appendix 12).

Thematic analysis (TA) (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2012) was used to explore the data derived from the semi-structured interviews. TA is described as a method for systematically identifying and organising meaning (themes) across a data set. It allows the researcher to make sense of collective or shared meaning and experiences (Braun & Clarke 2012; Bryman 2016). TA was chosen instead of other approaches (e.g., IPA) as it was deemed the most appropriate way to identify what was common in the data and make sense of those commonalities. The research

was not interested in identifying unique and idiosyncratic meaning within a single data item. IE does not prescribe what form of data analysis is to be used, however the limitations of IPA contributed to the decision to use TA. For example, Braun and Clarke (2013) suggest that IPA

"Lacks theoretical flexibility of thematic analysis and the role of the social-cultural context is often unclear"

(p183)

Given the nature of the socio-cultural context of this research and of IE, TA was therefore deemed more appropriate. Appendix 8 provides further details of how TA was applied to this research including the strengths and limitations of this approach (Braun and Clarke, 2013).

3.8.3.5 Stage 5: Reporting the study
The final stage of IE requests the researcher to provide a report, which is clear and concise for the key stakeholders. Parlett (1974) highlights the importance of ensuring that the report considers the readership audience and ensures that the information they require is at their *"fingertips"* (p17). This information should address the issues and questions that would have been raised in stage 1. There is also an emphasis for the report to be sensitive and tactful. However, this should not undermine the researcher's autonomy. Given this, some may find the information reported 'uncomfortable' to read or hear, whilst others might find them validating. Nonetheless, the researcher needs to represent the critical issues that may have arisen during the data collection. Burden (2008) suggests that a vital feature of this type of research is to provide key stakeholders with constructive feedback, which allows them to explore the experience of those involved to improve practice.

Stage 5 was a meeting with Laura as the initial 'contract' in stage 1 was negotiated and agreed with her. The meeting took place virtually in July 2021. Laura extended the invitation to other relevant professionals within the service who may benefit or be interested in attending. The agenda (Appendix 13) outlined the meeting structure; this was shared with attendees before the meeting. The agenda included:

1. A brief introduction to IE and its relation to the study, e.g., rationale.

2. How the research was completed, e.g., the method

3. Strengths of using APs and issues for consideration

4. Strengths of the AP Panel and issues for consideration

5. The role of the EP in this context

6. Action Points

The themes identified through the research were presented as part of the discussion to allow professionals within the LA to respond and reflect on the topics highlighted. Appendix 13 shares a write up following the discussion. Laura agreed to share the research findings with any professionals interested in attending the meeting but could not attend. Attendees of the meetings agreed on the subsequent actions following the findings. Chapter 5 (discussion) and appendix 13 includes feedback from the key professionals who attended the meeting. A model for accessing AP through the AP Panel for those at risk of school exclusion (figure 6) was developed to support the LA practices. This was shared with Laura and several other professionals two weeks after the meeting. This was not shared in the meeting as I wanted to provide the opportunity for the LA to think of solutions, this was in line with the consultative nature of IE (Burden, 2008) and consultative practices being encouraged and employed in Educational Psychology (Wagner 1995; Kelly Wolfson and Boyle 2008; Nolan and Moreland, 2014).

3.9 Critique of Illuminative Evaluation

The first critique of IE is the 'subjectivity' of this methodology. For example, subjectivity relating to decision making during the entirety of the research, particularly the approach and interpretation. In essence, it also relates to the information provided by the participants and the power dynamic between the researcher and the participants during data collection and checking of information (Jamieson et al., 1977). However, as Bumbuc (2016) and Creswell & Creswell (2018) noted, subjectivity is a critique of all qualitative research. However, Denzin & Lincoln (2008) suggest that no method can be 'value-free'. Furthermore, Jamieson et al., (1977) propose that IE does not claim to be value-free. Instead, it emphasises the importance of transparency regarding decision-making throughout, the impact of the researcher during the interviews, and the subjectivity of experiences and interpretation of the participants and researcher.

Another challenge faced by the researcher or 'evaluator' can be explained by psychological theory; 'confirmation bias' (Oswald & Grosjean, 2004). Confirmation bias describes when information is searched for, interpreted, and remembered so that it supports one's own beliefs. Further information that contradicts their pre-existing beliefs may strengthen the individual's

beliefs further as the individual works harder to justify why they feel they are correct. Confir-mation bias may also impact and be influenced by the 'use-ability' of the evaluator's work, as this is dependent on the 'clients' uptake of the information provided. It is important to note that this critique can be applied to any methodological approach and is not specific to IE. Subsequently, a way in which the researcher can acknowledge their subjectivity and potential biases' impact on the research, is through reflexivity (Bryman, 2016). A reflexive account of my subjectivity throughout this research is discussed in Chapter 5 (discussion).

Another critique of IE is surrounding the semantic of the word 'evaluation'. Robson (2002) suggests that whilst evaluations may employ research methods; often such studies may not be deemed as 'research'. However, Robson(2002) also notes that much

"Inquiry in the real world is essentially some form of evaluation"

(p6).

'Evaluation research' may be used in exchange to account for this. Due to the cultural-political stance discussed above (Stake, 1976), the terminology of 'evaluation' itself can hold negative connotations and perceptions for those involved in the 'program initiative' (Cooper, 2019). Despite being well informed, professionals responsible for delivering a 'program initiative' may perceive the role of the evaluator as being a judge of their actions. The socio-political climate of evidencing the effectiveness of 'program-initiatives' has potentially contributed to the discourse (Stake, 1976; Burden, 2008). The ethical implication of this has been discussed and will be explored again in Chapter 6 (conclusion). The narrative surrounding the purpose of 'evaluation' or 'evaluation research' can contribute to difficulties in recruitment as poten-tial settings or professionals are reluctant to participate or be 'investigated' (Parlett, 1974; Jamieson et al., 1977).

A third criticism of IE is related to the claim that this methodological approach is 'client-cen-tred'. There could be an argument of who is the 'true-client'; IE publications do not guide identifying the 'true client'. Is the 'true client' the professionals responsible for the 'program initiative' or the YP accessing the 'program initiative'. Furthermore, despite the acknowledge-ment that some readers may not agree with the contents of the report, this may lead to pres-sure on the 'evaluator' to potentially disprove or prove aspects of the 'program initiative' by the commissioning client (Parlett, 1974; Jamieson et al., 1977). Parlett (1974) emphasises the

evaluator's need to retain their integrity and present a sensitive, fair, and honest description. Nonetheless, the pressure placed on the researcher is a possible cause for concern. Finally, it could be suggested that IE is an outdated methodology and is not as widely recognised as other approaches. However, in response to this criticism, one could suggest that IE is widely recognised and has been used in research more recently in both education health and social care (Mason 2010; Gallini 2011; Burton 2012; Blackwell 2015; Cooper 2019; Carter 2020).

3.10 Generalizability in Qualitative Research
When generalizability is discussed within qualitative research, there is an ongoing assumption that this is a limitation of this type of research (Smith, 2018). Robson (2002) refers to generalizability as

"the extent to which the findings of the enquiry are more generally applicable outside the specifics of the situation studied."

(Robson 2002, p93)

The statement implies that research findings can be applied to the population in different situations or contexts, or findings could be replicated. Generalizability is often used to define quantitative research positively (Smith, 2018) and is linked to terms such as 'reliability' and 'validity' (Robson 2002; Creswell & Creswell 2018). Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure of a concept, whilst validity refers to whether an indicator set to measure that concept truly measures that concept (Bryman 2016). These terms were generated in traditional quantitative fixed designs and were previously suggested as a limitation of qualitative research (Robson 2002). Smith (2018) suggests that qualitative research lacks generalizability when it is understood only through one type of generalizability: "*statistical-probabilistic generalizability*" (p138). Applying this to qualitative research is problematic as the ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning quantitative research are different from that underpinning qualitative research (Smith 2018). Smith (2018) implies that 'statistical-probabilistic generalizability' does not fit with the epistemological and ontological assumptions of qualitative research, that knowledge is constructed and subjective.

Given these comments and the epistemological and ontological perspective of this study, one could suggest that 'statistical-probabilistic generalisability' is not a meaningful goal for this research. In line with the interpretive epistemological stance of this study, the term described

by Williams (2000) 'moderatum generalizations' was deemed more appropriate. 'Moderatum generalisation' refers to aspects of the research which can be seen in a broader set of recognizable features. He suggests researchers will often draw comparisons with findings from other research. The links between different research can also be made across comparable groups where the context maybe similar. 'Moderatum generalization' may be somewhat more tentative and limited than 'statistical-probabilistic generalizability', however it mediates the view that generalizability is impossible in qualitative research (Bryant, 2016).

3.11 Quality Criteria
Creswell & Creswell (2018) propose the importance for researchers to convey the steps in their qualitative study to check for accuracy and ensure the credibility of their findings. Whilst others indicate applying a set criteria to qualitative research to ensure quality in this type of research (Elliot et al., 1999; Tracy 2010). In such models of quality criteria specific reference is made to term such as 'trustworthiness', 'authenticity' and 'credibility' (Lincoln et al., 2011; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Several steps were taken to ensure that the research was trustworthy, credible, and deemed good qualitative research. Tracey's (2010) Eight 'Big-tent', criteria for qualitative research was used within the research due to its flexibility and emphasis on the context in which the research took place. This model compromises of eight 'key markers' (figure 4). The steps taken in line with this model have been discussed in detail in the in chapter 6 (conclusion).

Criteria for quality (end goal)	Various means, practices, and methods through which to achieve
Worthy topic	The topic of the research is • Relevant • Timely • Significant • Interesting
Rich rigor	The study uses sufficient, abundant, appropriate, and complex • Theoretical constructs • Data and time in the field • Sample(s) • Context(s) • Data collection and analysis processes
Sincerity	The study is characterized by • Self-reflexivity about subjective values, biases, and inclinations of the researcher(s) • Transparency about the methods and challenges
Credibility	The research is marked by • Thick description, concrete detail, explication of tacit (nontextual) knowledge, and showing rather than telling • Triangulation or crystallization • Multivocality • Member reflections
Resonance	The research influences, affects, or moves particular readers or a variety of audiences through • Aesthetic, evocative representation • Naturalistic generalizations • Transferable findings
Significant contribution	The research provides a significant contribution • Conceptually/theoretically • Practically • Morally • Methodologically • Heuristically
Ethical	The research considers • Procedural ethics (such as human subjects) • Situational and culturally specific ethics • Relational ethics • Exiting ethics (leaving the scene and sharing the research)
Meaningful coherence	The study • Achieves what it purports to be about • Uses methods and procedures that fit its stated goals • Meaningfully interconnects literature, research questions/foci, findings, and interpretations with each other

Figure 4: Eight Step Model for Quality Criteria in Qualitative Research

(Tracey, 2010, p840)

3.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined the purpose, the rationale and the research questions of this study based on the gaps in the literature outlined in chapter 2. Ethical implication of the research was shared at the start of the chapter. The chapter then went on to outline the epistemological and ontological underpinnings and the explanation of the method chosen. The explanation of the method introduced the historical underpinnings and suggested the relevance to research in educational psychology. The chapter then outlined how the research was carried out in line with the five stages of IE, considering both the 'instructional system' and 'learning Milieu'. It also included a critique of IE and an exploration of an alternative method considered. The Chapter concluded with a critical discussion on applying generalizability to qualitative research and other models to ensure the trustworthiness, credibility, and authenticity of this research.

The next chapter will explore the findings from both interviews and LA documentation, and a triangulation of findings related to the four outlined research questions.

4 Findings

4.1 Introduction
This chapter will present the findings from the data analysis, in relation to the research questions. The chapter will also include an account of how the data will be presented and a description of the findings. A triangulation of the findings linked to the research questions will be provided to conclude the chapter.

4.1.1 Presentation of findings
As mentioned in the methodology chapter, this research follows the framework of Illuminative Evaluation (IE) (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Parlett, 1974; Jamieson et al., 1977; Burden, 2008). The data gathered for the research was established through several sources: interviews with professionals from the Local Authority (LA), Alternative Provision (AP), Educational Psychologists (EPs) and examination of LA documentation. Interview data for all the key stakeholders will be presented jointly, as it was felt that this would emphasise the varying perspectives of different stakeholders and explore any potential contradictions in LA processes.

Thematic analysis (TA) (Braun & Clarke 2012) was chosen to analyse the data from the semi-structured interviews. Braun & Clarke (2012) highlight the importance of researcher transparency due to the subjective nature of qualitative research. Several steps were taken within the research to ensure the 'trustworthiness' and 'credibility' (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) of this research. For example, keeping a research diary to support reflexivity (appendix 14), being transparent with the researcher's standpoint, and using peer and professional supervision. In addition, the six phases of TA, alongside the key decisions taken in this analysis, can be found in Appendix 8.

The LA documentation, which supports using AP as a preventative approach to permanent exclusion, was examined to explore how it supports this process. Content Analysis (CA) was adopted to examine the documentation (Robson 2002; Bryman 2016). The 'recording units' of interest were 'Alternative provision', 'Alternative Provision Panel', 'exclusion', 'referral' and 'Educational Psychologist' or equivalent term.

4.2 Interview Findings:

As stated in the methodology chapter, participants were provided with pseudo names to protect their identity (Table 3). TA highlighted five salient themes amongst all nine interviews with several subthemes within each theme (Figure 5). The five salient themes were identified as

1. Use of Alternative Provision

2. Alternative Provision vs Mainstream

3. Alternative Provision Panel

4. The Young Person's Needs

5. The Role of Educational Psychologists
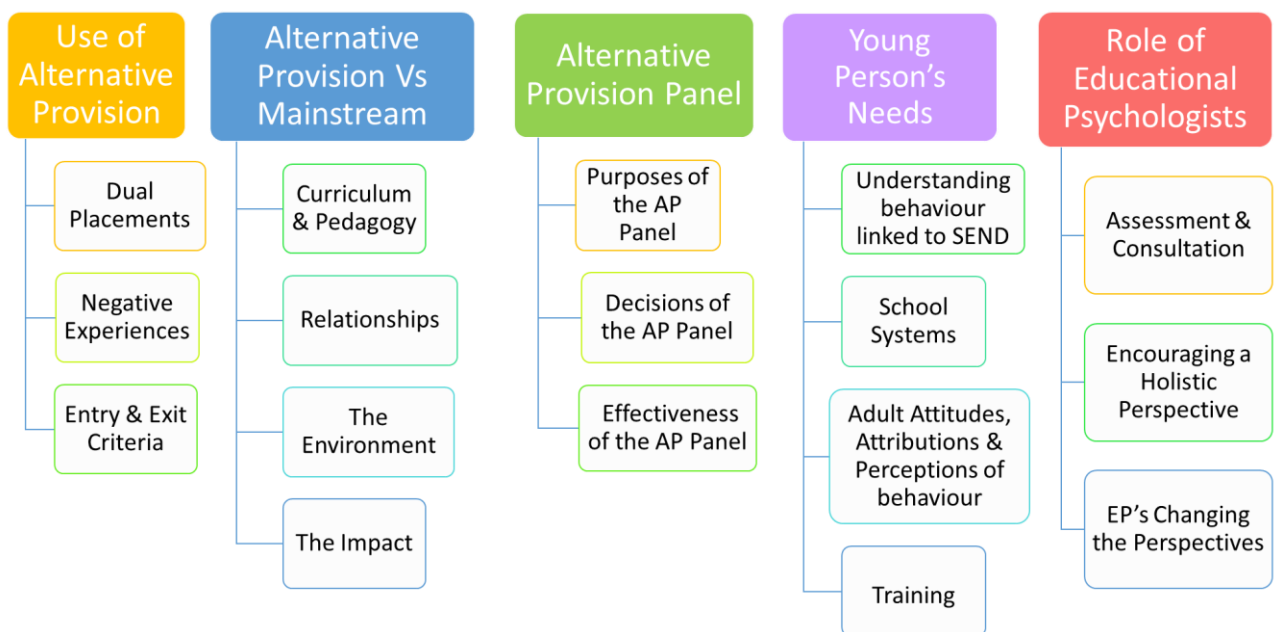
Figure 5: Thematic Map generated from TA of the Interview Data.

Whilst the themes and subthemes have been presented in a linear manner (figure 5), it is important to note that there is an overlap between themes and subthemes which will be explored in the findings.

4.2.1 Theme 1: Use of Alternative Provision

All participants reflected and shared viewpoints on the use of AP as a preventative approach to school exclusion. Participants felt that AP could be used positively and negatively,

depending on the individual perspective and thoughts about whether this was the best option.

> Grace: *"I suppose my question and what I constantly think to myself is that the best option."*

Participants also believed that APs are being used to prevent permanent exclusion due to a lack of early intervention. Some professionals also felt that if APs are used to prevent permanent exclusion, then this required a transparent set entry and exit criteria. They perceived that this would ensure rigorous assessment to guarantee needs matched the provision and that there was a planned and supported exit from AP for the young person. Given these views, three subthemes were generated: Dual Placements, Negative Experiences, and Entry & Exit Criteria.

4.2.1.1 Dual Placements

Participants reflected on the successful experiences and what they perceived might have contributed to these situations when using AP to prevent permanent exclusion. Some participants felt that a dual placement between AP and school was when they experienced the most success:

> Layla: *"wasn't about them being out of school full-time. They might have just needed a little bit of extra support a couple days a week to do something different."*

Dual placement meant that YP continued to attend their mainstream school and attended an AP during the week to complete some practical-based learning, e.g., an apprenticeship. Participants reflected that the AP provided them with positive experiences that could be celebrated when the young person returned to school. Patricia stated that dual placement had a positive impact on the YP's emotional wellbeing:

> Patricia: *"he still felt like he was part of the school and that the school wanted him and accepted him."*

According to Patricia, this then contributed to the success this young person experienced. Participants' perceptions suggested the success of dual placement was reliant on collaborative working between professionals in schools, APs, and the LA. Emphasis was also

given on working collaboratively with families and YP. Collaborative working was deemed by participants as clear communication with the sharing of relevant information, e.g., what is working well and sharing of good practice. Professionals felt strongly about the lack of collaboration and APs and schools working in a silo. Peter strongly felt that dual placement and collaborative working meant that schools also remained responsible for that young person:

> Peter: *"I'm totally against schools having the ability to wash their hands of kids and just leave them to their own devices. And there is where I think problem arises."*

Professionals perceived that dual placement meant that schools retained responsibility and accountability for the YP. Patricia compared a success story to another case where the young person was almost 'offloaded' and seen as the APs responsibility; she reflected that this created a dichotomy of experiences for that young person. Collaborative working as part of a dual placement was perceived as essential to the work in AP.

4.2.1.2 Negative Experiences

Participants also drew on experiences where they have felt that AP had not been utilised appropriately and instead used as a 'last resort' or a 'holding pen' to provide the school with respite. For example, some professionals felt that AP is a last resort for young people due to several failed managed moves. Further to this, James stated that continually sending YP to different schools to experience failure directly impacted the young person. He also perceived this wasted valuable time in the young person's education as history would continue to repeat itself. In contrast to these views, other professionals stated that AP should be used as a last resort and that schools often panicked following an escalation of presenting behaviour.

> Patricia: *"Schools tend to panic, they think. Oh my gosh we can't cope with this child, shove him over there in AP."*

However, John indicated that he perceived schools are using APs with the best intentions and that the narrative of 'offloading' was the by-product of schools trying their best to meet the needs of YP. Furthermore, both John and Sam saw their role as EPs to maintain placement in a mainstream setting as they felt the outcomes for YP were much more substantial when they remained in school. Furthermore, findings suggested APs are also used as 'holding pens' to

complete further assessment; specifically, statutory assessments. John shared that he felt that the challenges within the system to access a specialist setting might have contributed to this.

> John: "...*it appears easier for schools to access an AP than it does to go through the EHCP route for specialist's place....by virtue of the system, that the AP is almost a bit of a shortcut.*"

The lack of specialist provision for SEMH within the LA was perceived as a likely reason for the increased use of AP. Moreover, professionals perceived APs are being used to provide respite and alleviate the stress on the school community, as they found it highly challenging to manage 'aggressive' and 'violent' behaviours. Layla felt that it provided the school time and space to think about what they would need to put in place to support the young person.

In addition, Professionals perceived that the lack of early intervention in the mainstream setting had directly impacted the use of AP for these YP. The lack of early intervention was linked to the universal support mechanisms and SEN provisions in mainstream settings. Early intervention was also related to identification of needs, this is linked to the theme 'the young person's needs.' Participants felt that the impact of needs not being met through intervention caused a downwards spiral in behaviour. Grace also perceived professionals could predict the YP that may end up in some form of AP and that early intervention may prevent this. Mary saw the role of the EP as being part of that early intervention through holistic assessment.

4.2.1.3 Entry & Exit Criteria

One of the factors that professionals felt was imperative to consider as part of the entry criteria was AP matching the young person's needs. Yet in reality the lack of available provision meant this was not always possible. For example, Layla reflected that the entry via the AP Panel is sometimes based on the availability of provision rather than the young person's needs:

> Layla: "*I think in reality it's just we need to find this child a place because there isn't much to choose from really is there.*"

Furthermore, professionals believed graduated assessment based on strengths and needs should inform the discussion on which AP the young person should attend. Though in reality, as experienced by participants, an assessment would usually take place within the AP.

John: "*…the needs assessment once they're there is arguably too late, that should actually happen in mainstream.*"

In particular, the EPs felt that they had not been part of the graduated assessment and when the young person attended the AP, the AP would then request a statutory assessment.

Patricia: "*…we get them through the statutory route and then I'll pick them up then. But never having laid eyes on a young person before, you know when they were in school.*"

Sam: "*…it wasn't referred to me until a decision had been made over AP, so I wasn't particularly involved in the graduated assessment.*"

Nonetheless, John considered APs offering a more thorough assessment as they have the skills, staff, time and resources to do this. John perceived the assessment completed in AP would then help inform the subsequent steps, e.g., whether the young person returns to mainstream or attends a specialist provision. In contradiction, John later reflected on whether mainstream schools should keep YP longer to complete this assessment. Similarly, others felt it was the role of the EP to assess the young person's needs. This links to theme 5 'the role of EPs.

Additionally, professionals felt that the young person's voice & 'hook' (e.g., strengths & interests) and voice was an essential factor in the entry criteria. The young person's 'hook' should be linked to their future aspirations. Alongside the young person's hook, professionals perceived the young person's motivation in attending AP was important for participation longevity.

Ella: "*I think that is the best for the child, but if the child doesn't think that or engage with it, they're never gonna do it and its about that.*" (sic)

Grace reflected on a case where despite the AP offer including the young person's 'hook', the young person did not participate as she was not motivated to attend the AP. Similarly, John perceived the young person's mindset around the use of AP was crucial for consideration. Drawing on his experiences he suggested that it was often viewed as a sanction rather than a positive when used following a behavioural incident(s). Thus, potentially impacting the young person's motivation to attend AP. John specifically reflected on a case where he supported

the young person during the transition through mentoring approaches to help change their mindset and ensure they experienced success on entry into AP. He perceived that the EPs have the right skill set to do this. Despite this, Mary and Sam reflected on the lack of EP involvement in planning and supporting the transition to AP, with Mary feeling that this was sometimes missing on entry to AP.

Participants felt that there should be a clear exit plan for the YP once they are in the AP. There was an emphasis on the need to have some clear, realistic timeframes for how long YP should remain in AP and for this to be based on clear assessment:

> Patricia: "…*that should be an agreed amount of time before the young person goes in. And again, it should be based on, I think like an assessment….*"

Despite this, there were some contradictions in perceptions whether YP remained in AP or returned to the mainstream setting. Perhaps the differences reflect the complexity of provision offering very different types of placements and dependent upon age. For example, James felt that he would keep the young person till year 11 and often kept some YP for sixth form. Some participants reflected on the difficulty of returning to the mainstream setting, suggesting that placing the young person in a similar environment would result in a similar situation. In contrast, others perceived that the aim would be to get the young person back into the mainstream setting:

> Layla: "…*I don't want them to appear in year 7 and leave at year 11…I want to help them to get them what they need to be able to go back and access mainstream.*"

Similarly, to the entry criteria, participants felt that there needed to be a planned and supported transition out of AP. Without this level of support and planning, participants believed the young person would experience 'failure', reversing some of the positive work achieved from attending AP. Layla felt that there would be a 'reintegration mentor' who would support that transition, with support gradually decreasing as the young person continued to experience success.

4.2.2 Theme 2: Alternative Provision vs Mainstream School
During the interviews, professionals believed YP at risk of school exclusion needed something different and that 'one size does not fit all'.

Ella: *"…trying to shoehorn a child into, you must go to this school to get an education, … we were setting that child up to fail."*

Professionals naturally reflected on what they considered to be different about APs, this resulted in the subthemes of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Relationships, The Environment and The Impact.

4.2.2.1 Curriculum & Pedagogy:
Professionals believed that the AP curriculum was significantly different from what was being offered in schools, this was more likely to engage some YP. They felt the narrowing of the national curriculum in schools does not lend itself to the skillset and motivation of many YP. Professionals also perceived that the curriculum within AP was bespoke to each individual, as APs had the capacity and flexibility to do this:

Ella: *"AP providers can do that because they have the flexibility…schools also don't have the time to do that… That is the big difference that they have the ability to tailor it to the individual children."*

The participants' perceptions were that this bespoke curriculum also included teaching YP the life skills to keep themselves safe in the community and help them develop their functional literacy and numeracy skills for adulthood. Whilst participants reflected that many YP are not able to access the national curriculum, for those that could, they were still able to access their GCSEs in AP. Reflecting on a case Sam proposed the young person was on track to attaining his GCSEs but was also allowed to complete a BTec, which was linked to his future goals of going to college. In support of this, James suggested:

James: *"APs are not just there to manage behaviour."*

Linked to the curriculum, participants perceived the pedagogy in AP was also bespoke and the teaching approaches were tailored to the learning needs of the YP. The AP used a real-world example to support the learning and social inclusion of YP. Despite this there was some contradictions surrounding the qualifications of teaching staff in AP. For example, James suggested that all the AP teachers are qualified and have worked in mainstream schools before working in AP. However, Layla stated that they did not have qualified teachers to teach a primary curriculum, and this is what she recognized she needed for some secondary pupils. Thus, showing the variability amongst APs with teacher qualifications.

4.2.2.2 Relationships

Participants perceived the relationships between YP and adults in AP was much stronger and positive than those in mainstream school. They believed that this contributed to the success that YP experienced in AP. Participants recognised that YP felt listened to, respected, and accepted for who they are. Participants reflected why this was not possible in mainstream schools as they perceived that the school's capacity (e.g., time and sheer volume of pupils) meant that this was logistically challenging.

> Layla: "*…we can get to know the young people and we can build relationships and trust with them because we have the time.*"

Others also perceived the relatability to YP as an essential factor within those relationships. Knowing the young person's interest and vice versa, helped foster these positive relationships, including having a genuine infinity of YP life experiences and difficulties outside the classroom, e.g., at home and in the community.

Equally, participants felt the relationship between families and school was likely to have broken down, which may have contributed or exacerbated the use of AP. Peter perceived that it was important for somebody in school to maintain a rapport with the family, so they would trust that using AP was the correct decision. Additionally, professionals perceived the EP role as important in advocating for YP and their families and supporting those positive relationships with professionals in APs and schools.

> Peter: "*…the EP has built a good rapport with the family and supports the family to understand what school has put in place but also advocate for the family…they built trust and respect when working with school and family.*"

4.2.2.3 The Environment

Participants also compared the school and the AP environment. Most participants perceived that the smaller setting size in AP was more suited to some YP than a busy mainstream setting. Participants believed that APs had the capacity (e.g., time and staff) and flexibility to meet the young person's needs and to build consistent relationships. This subtheme overlaps with other themes/subthemes e.g., relationships and 'the young person's needs.' Professionals also perceived the school environment meant that YP who are not academic do not thrive,

inevitably impacting the young person's behaviour. However, participants' views highlighted the complexity of the school environment:

> Peter: "*…because all of the pressure on schools, staffing, exams results… weighing up the needs of the individual and the needs of the community…*"

For these complex reasons, participants perceived through no fault of their own, the school environment is challenging for some of these YP. There was also a resounding emphasis by participants on the school having to be driven by academic performance through league tables and other initiatives leaving less time for social and emotional wellbeing.

4.2.2.4 The Impact

Given the difference between AP and mainstream school, participants naturally reflected on the impact of AP on the young person's academic progress and social and emotional wellbeing. Participants perceived the impact as generally positive if the crucial factors discussed have been considered, such as the collaborative working, the environment, relationships, and curriculum and pedagogical approaches. Participants perceived AP as having a positive impact on the young person's social and emotional wellbeing.

> Grace: "*…connection they made with the worker at the AP gave him a different sense of perspective and more self-worth. For the one I could, I could see the confidence in her.*" (sic)

Others also noted the academic progress these YP made as a direct result of the factors in AP:

> James: "*his mainstream provider said that he would end up in prison, never once was there a behaviour issues and he achieved the highest marks.*"

> Mary: "*…she just had her GCSE results, obviously, she got sixes and sevens.*"

However, Mary reflected that not all cases are success stories, with Peter suggesting that unless AP is done exceptionally well, there is a risk YP might learn undesirable behaviours, resulting in offending.

4.2.3 Theme 3: Alternative Provision Panel

The AP Panel is a process that has been set up in the LA and is used to place YP at risk of permanent exclusion at AP. As part of this research and in relation to the research questions, professionals were asked to share their viewpoints surrounding the AP Panel. Participants

reflected that the AP Panel was still in its infancy, and it would not be required if professionals took accountability and responsibility for all YP. However, the AP Panel was vital in its role and role in the 'bigger picture'. Participants hoped that it was a robust system and recognised it was essential for schools, APs and YP to be part of this robust system. Subsequently, three subthemes were generated from participants responses: Purposes of the AP Panel, Decisions of the AP Panel and Effectiveness of the AP Panel.

4.2.3.1 Purposes of the AP Panel

Participants reflected on the purposes of the AP Panel in terms of the 'bigger picture'; they perceived there were several justifications for the AP Panel with the sole aim of creating a person-centred system for YP. Professionals perceived the purposes of the AP Panel were providing a sense of regulation and governance, safeguarding, accountability and the need to monitor and evaluate the use of APs. Firstly, it was perceived one of the AP Panel's purposes was to have some sense of regulation and governance of APs being used. Participants perceived APs were being used too often with schools easily giving up and the LA being unaware:

> Ella: *"…we're going from 0 to 100 in one go and so that when the Panel was set up that was very much about that strategic overview so that there was a check and balance."* (sic)

Linked directly to regulation, professionals also perceived a financial element to the purposes of the AP Panel. The LA had overspent on funding; therefore, another purpose of the AP Panel was also to reduce the spending. Moreover, professionals perceived one of the purposes of the AP Panel was to safeguard vulnerable children:

> Grace: *"...one of the reasons the Panel was set up, was to make sure that we've got oversight for making sure that we know where these children are going."*

It was felt that the YP who attended AP are some of the most vulnerable YP within the LA, professionals perceived it was highly problematic that they were unsure if YP were accessing a suitable safe education, or if they are missing education entirely. It was perceived that the AP Panel would prevent this from occurring. Responsibility and accountability were also deemed another purpose of the AP Panel. Professionals perceived the role of AP Panel was to challenge schools:

Peter: *"it takes I back to school and holds them accountable actually have you done enough."*

Peter drew on his experiences as a headteacher, understanding the challenges having been in that role himself. However, he acknowledged that it was important for the AP Panel to challenge schools and hold them responsible. He felt strongly about the schools' accountability and perceived that if mainstream settings had the mindset that every young person would start in year seven and finish in year eleven, there would be no need for the AP Panel. Ella reported that schools had responded well to the challenge and accountability offered by the AP Panel as school investment continued.

As perceived by professionals, the final role of the AP Panel was to monitor and evaluate APs as part of a quality assurance. Professionals thought that it was important for the AP Panel to monitor and evaluate APs to ensure their effectiveness and that the AP offer was meeting the needs of the young person:

John: *"what we don't want is that we're sending students to a provision which we think is offering XY and Z and actually they either are or aren't offering that, but they may not be any good…"*

Again, participants linked this to ensuring vulnerable YP had access to the correct provision, suitable education and made progress. John reflected on the difficulties to monitor AP using the AP Panel due to several AP's being private, e.g., non-registered. James reflected on a monitoring visit from the LA, and he assumed that as the AP was deemed outstanding, he would receive more referrals via the AP Panel. All EP participants perceived the EP role to be important in supporting the quality assurance of APs. Sam and John reflected that whilst EPs were usually only involved in statutory work in APs (e.g., annual reviews and statutory assessments), they could offer more to support provision in AP. Similarly, James saw the EP role as monitoring and developing provision within the AP whilst providing advice to senior leadership.

4.2.3.2 Decisions of the AP Panel

Professionals reflected on the impact of the decisions made at the AP Panel:

Ella: *"None of us want to make the wrong decision…we want to make absolutely damn certain that AP is the right solution of that child."*

Ella believed that sometimes the decisions weighed heavily on her due to the implications on the young person. Furthermore, professionals reflected on several factors which may influence the AP Panel's decision or was influential in the decision making, such as the information presented to the AP Panel, panel member subjectivity, being able to ask questions, the young person (their needs, voice and behaviour) and finances.

Participants perceived that the AP Panel's decisions are influenced by the information they are provided with. They reflected that the information needed to be purposeful and provide a holistic assessment of the young person. Graduated assessment also needed to be included e.g., evidence of significant planned and reviewed intervention. Professionals felt passionately that decisions should be based on the evidence presented.

> Sam: "*…what we have learned through those cycles of intervention is actually mainstream is probably not the right place for them.*"

Similarly, Peter perceived schools' honesty in what they have or have not tried is vital in the information presented to the AP Panel. Other participants also reflected on the specifics and the type of information presented at the AP Panel. For example, John believed the information provided by external professionals (e.g., EPs), specifically the formulation within reports, can be crucial to inform those decisions. Additionally, Grace reflected on reading information presented to the AP Panel and suggested it was like "*war and peace*" and that she forgot why the young person's case was referred to Panel. Subsequently, participants perceived that having concise, evidence-based information was significant for the AP Panel to both make and influence those decisions. Despite this, challenges were noted in the information presented to the AP Panel:

> John: "*…Information provided can be very limited and sort of word of mouth and hearsay as opposed to data and written information.*"

The subjectivity on information presented at panel was proposed as a concern for John, this can be seen as problematic in the decision making. Similarly, Grace felt that she often reflected on her own subjectivity when making decisions:

> Grace: "*I'm very mindful of when I read something about a child with a disability…it pulls the heartstrings.*"

Grace perceived that being aware and acknowledging one's positionality within the decision making would help minimise subjectivity. Grace also perceived that the panel members' experiences of APs might influence the decision in which provider the AP Panel agrees to use. Professionals also perceived that asking questions whilst attending the AP Panel was essential and often influenced decisions. They felt that having a safe space where others had the confidence to ask questions was paramount in the decision making.

The young person was another factor that was perceived as influential by participants. Professionals recognised that 'violent behaviour' or behaviours that put others at risk in the school community (both peers and adults) influenced the AP Panel's decision. Professionals perceived there would be a clear consensus amongst panel members that AP was the appropriate step in these instances. James perceived that the YPs' behaviour in APs would also be considered when deciding which AP would be appropriate for the young person. Furthermore, professionals perceived the young person's voice and what was in the best interest of that young person should be at the forefront of the decisions. Yet in practice decisions were often made without understanding YP or their views:

> Grace: *"I think there is a lack of understanding for some of the challenges these children have. And we're making decisions without really understanding them."*

> James: *"Also, the voice of the child. What does the child want*?"

Professionals believed it was highly significant that YPs' voice, alongside their needs was seen as part of the decision making. However, they reflected that in reality, this was not always the case and reasons for this might be linked to financial constraints. Participants views suggested that whilst financial constraints should not be a factor in the decisions; it does influence decisions.

> Mary: *"I sometimes think the local authority is financially driven rather than driven by the needs of the child*."

Professionals recognised that shrunken school and LA budgets meant that there had been financial implications directly impacting the young person's ability to access a more suitable provision. However, Layla perceived the quality of the provision might influence whether the LA choose to fund a placement at an AP via the AP Panel.

4.2.3.3 Effectiveness of the AP Panel

Professionals were asked to reflect on the strengths and areas of development of the AP Panel, as aligned with the research questions. Professionals reflected on the effectiveness of the AP Panel linked to its purpose in the 'bigger picture'. They perceived that if the AP Panel is to exist, then this initiative must be adequate. Professionals perceived that research to evaluate the AP Panel would be helpful. Similarly, professionals would welcome other professionals (e.g., from schools) to scrutinise this initiative, as is done with APs. They specifically deliberated on factors they perceived as paramount to the AP Panel's effectiveness and whether they believed AP Panel was effective, highlighting strengths and areas for development.

Professionals recognised panel membership was an essential factor in the effectiveness of the AP Panel. Firstly, they believed the current AP panel members provided a broader perspective needed to make those decisions. For example, the attendance of various professionals both internal and external services (e.g., police) brought different experiences, knowledge, and information to the discussion. For example, Peter felt that he brought his experiences from working previously as a headteacher and in APs. Professionals believed that extending panel membership to social care would add tremendous value to the AP Panel. They perceived that social care input was missing from the AP Panel. Other professionals felt that it was pivotal to have professionals on the AP Panel who had good knowledge of SEN, schools, the LA systems, the barriers to access a mainstream setting and knowledge of each AP.

> John: "…*right people on Panel who have the right skills and knowledge of the systems and the child and SEN to make sure that it works*"

John thought there was more opportunity of success when school referred to the AP Panel, as the knowledge of several experienced professionals is better than a single professional in school with limited knowledge. John perceived that panel members had the breadth and knowledge to choose the most suitable AP. However, Mary believed that the expertise at the AP Panel was not always utilised. She reflected on her experiences where herself and other colleagues' experiences have not been valued or considered in the decision making:

Mary: *"…and I understand how [Named professional] feels, she's a band, you know her grading is way way way way below the rest of the members of Panel…. It's still very group head focus."*

Mary attributed her experiences to a potential hierarchy at AP Panel based on a job title. In contrast, Ella suggested:

Ella: *"…if somebody feels strongly about something, they have that option to be heard to explain….that is all taken into consideration when we collectively make a final decision."*

Ella perceived decisions were made collaboratively, however Mary did not feel that this was always the case. Transparency of the AP Panel and panel decision was raised as a concern amongst some participants. For example, Mary shared decisions are sometimes made outside the Panel and subsequently questioned the purpose of panel and who made those decisions. Layla also felt that she had not been included in deciding who attends the AP Panel and why. She believed that if a decision was being made about using AP, this should include the APs. Interestingly, EPs were currently not attending the AP Panel. However, professionals perceived EPs would be useful panel members as they could critically unpick the situation, change the narrative in the discussion and help to focus on meeting YP's needs.

Professionals who attended the AP Panel reflected on how differing opinions are managed within the AP Panel. Some professionals believed that the AP Panel was a safe space where professionals respected one another and could question and challenge one another.

Peter: *"…I think there is respect amongst people that amongst the Panel and we do respect differing viewpoints, and one of the reasons for having Panel, is to get a variety of viewpoints of the situation."* (sic)

Similarly, Grace thought differing viewpoints might arise on the AP Panel when professionals look at the situation from their specialisms. Ella perceived her role on the AP Panel as helping others within her team recognise and understand the Panel's decision. However, Mary felt that sometimes the AP panel members do not feel they have a voice or that their voice is less important than others:

> Mary: "*she now feels that she doesn't have a valued opinion. She actually came to me after last Panel and said I don't know why I bother*."

In addition to this, there was a level of uncertainty around the AP Panel and what each AP offered amongst some of the participants, particularly those who do not attend e.g., EPs and AP professionals. Uncertainty also included the entry & exit criteria for APs and the Panel, e.g., with how decisions were made and who attended the AP Panel. Sam thought it was 'alarming' that she did not know anything about the AP Panel.

Furthermore, Mary also shared concerns relating to 'emergency cases' where a decision needed to be made before the following AP Panel in another three weeks. She questioned and reflected on having an 'emergency panel', suggesting who decides who attends this Panel and who makes those final decisions? She perceived there needed to be some clear transparent guidance and information regarding the emergency panel or more frequent panels.

In addition, some professionals' thought the AP Panel might be holding off on the inevitable with some decisions and subsequently be at risk of failing the child.

> Mary: "*Panel is in danger of becoming a computers say no, rather than looking at that individual in-depth.*" (sic)

Equally, professionals perceived it was essential to ensure that decisions are made and acted upon swiftly, as delays in the process may have consequences for the young person. Grace reflected on a case that was passed through various panels within the LA, creating delays. Finally, participants believed that the investment in the AP Panel and relationships were significant factors to the AP Panel's effectiveness. Professionals perceived that they had good relationships with both the schools and APs and managed the power dynamics carefully, considering implications. They perceived that schools at any point could stop investing in the AP Panel. Peter believed that all schools could see the benefit to the AP Panel, whilst Ella hoped the commitment to invest into the AP Panel continued.

4.2.4 Theme 4: Young Person's Needs
As suggested in the subtheme 'entry criteria', participants felt that often the young persons' needs would be assessed once they had reached AP. There was a resounding emphasis on the lack of identification of SEN, which may be linked to the young person's presenting behaviour:

> Patricia: *"some schools are not great identifying either…They don't identify kids; they don't pick up on those early behaviours."*

Several factors were identified from the perceptions and experiences of professionals as to why they believed YPs' needs were not identified and potential ways to overcome this in secondary schools. As a result, several subthemes were generated; Understanding behaviour linked to SEN, School Systems, Adult Attitudes, Attributions & Perceptions of Behaviour and The Need for Training.

4.2.4.1 Understanding Behaviour linked to SEN:

Firstly, participants felt there was a lack of understanding of what constitutes SEN. In particular, the fine line between behaviour and SEN, where often young people with SEN are seen as 'naughty and 'disruptive'.

> Grace: *"I think its understanding about what behaviour is and what SEN is again. And not making a judgement that its behaviour, when likely it probably SEN"* (sic)

> John: *"At what point is it becoming a naughty pupil? Actually, it's probably got some needs. That's a real barrier to the right identification of those needs."*

Interestingly, EPs Sam and John, perceived the cross over from behaviour to SEN may still be 'murky' in secondary schools as a direct result in the change of legislative frameworks (e.g. SEND Code of Practice in 2015). The legislation saw specific change in terminology for example 'behaviour difficulties' changed to social emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. Professionals perceived that there might still be a disconnect between recognising that behavioural challenges are linked to underlying needs and therefore do fall within the SEN remit. John reflected on the difficulties in mainstream settings in recognising at what point behaviour becomes SEN. Others also perceived that possible SEN results in presenting behaviours. For example, Layla reflected on a case where the young person had significant learning needs, which likely impacted his behaviour. This young person was referred for his behaviour to AP with the assessment in AP revealing his learning needs. Layla later reflected on whether teachers had the suitable support to identify needs.

4.2.4.2 School Systems

Participants also perceived the school systems in mainstream schools are a barrier to identifying needs. Participants referred to the two distinct systems in school: the 'pastoral

route' or the 'SEN route'. They reflected on how these routes potentially determine the outcomes in intervention:

> Sam: *"…there's a disconnect between pastoral/behaviour support and the SEN department….the decisions around accessing AP are often taken with Pastoral/ behaviour conversation where SEN is necessarily not recognised as an appropriate kind of participant of that…"*

Above Sam is seen reflecting on two systems that may not communicate with one another within a setting, potentially missing opportunities to identify additional needs. Sam later referred to the 'power structures' within these systems where some of these decisions are made by the senior leadership team, which might not include the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo). She perceived that YP are often presented at the AP Panel without SEN department being entirely aware. Similar, John reflected on the challenges of 'marrying up' the two systems in his secondary school, suggesting that the exchange of pupil knowledge across the systems and then upskilling all school professionals in understanding SEMH was essential to overcome this.

4.2.4.3 Adult Attitudes, Attributions & Perceptions of Behaviour:

Adult attitudes and attributions of 'behaviour' was perceived as potentially impacting needs being identified and the support YP are offered whilst in a mainstream setting. Offered support inevitably impacting the young person's social and emotional wellbeing. Participants specifically reflected on the negative thoughts and attitudes of adults and the impact of this on the young person's presenting behaviour:

> Layla: *"…the head of year said to the new member of staff oh he is a nightmare. Watch out for him in your lesson. Now how do you think that made the young person feel….and what do you think they're going to be like in that teacher's lesson, they are going to live up to that expectation."*

Layla's experiences suggest that adult attitudes potentially result in a negative cycle of behaviour and a self-fulfilling prophecy. Similarly, others reflected on their experiences and wondered whether the adult perceptions and subsequent labelling of the behaviour resulted in needs not being identified. For example, Grace drew on her experiences of YP who received multiple fixed-term exclusions and were later identified as having significant speech and

language needs. She believed that perhaps these YP were always perceived as 'naughty' rather than young people with SEN. In contrast, some professionals believed that the complexities surrounding some of these YP and the lack of staff experience, expertise, and confidence to adapt to meet complex needs, resulted in these perceptions or attributions of behaviour. Mary reflected on the demands of the role of the teacher and how this might impact the identification of needs and potentially contribute to perceptions of the young person's behaviour:

> Mary: "*Teachers now they're not teachers, they're expected to be social workers and SEN experts and family support workers….I think things are being missed because schools are expected to be everything to everybody.*"

4.2.4.4 Training:
Professionals reflected on overcoming some of the barriers discussed to identify the young person's needs. They felt that ongoing training to help staff recognise and identify SEN by helping them build on their knowledge and skillset would help overcome challenges with early identification and intervention. Many professionals felt there needed to be an emphasis on the need of ongoing training to provide staff with the opportunity to revisit their learning:

> Patricia: "*…refreshers as well because I think that if we refresh people's knowledge and understanding…And just needs to be, you know, as with everything revisited.*"

Interestingly, Patricia reflected on the challenges of mainstream schools recognising the need for training and then investing in that training. Similarly, Mary perceived the lack of uptake of training may be related to staff perceptions on roles and responsibilities:

> Mary: "*Do they get enough SEMH training or do they go..oh thats the SENCo role?*"

Alongside training, John felt it was crucial to work alongside the two school systems (pastoral & SEN) to identify SEN. In contrast, Grace felt that whilst training was significant in mainstream schools; ongoing training should also be a requirement in APs, to enable them to support YP with SEN. As an AP provider, Layla felt that it was important that her staff received ongoing training as she recognised the complexities surrounding YP had changed. She felt that she was proactive in ensuring that staff received the appropriate training.

4.2.5 Theme 5: The role of Educational Psychologists (EPs)

Professional saw the EP role as a critical friend to schools, APs and the AP Panel. They believed that the EP role was 'invaluable' in these situations. For example, Ella perceived she had the confidence in the quality of information shared through EP reports and viewed this as highly trustworthy information. Several subthemes were generated based on the participants' viewpoints of the EP role, such as, assessment & consultation, encouraging a holistic perspective, and changing perspectives.

4.2.5.1 Assessment & Consultation

Professionals perceived the role of EPs as paramount to identifying the young person's needs through assessment. They recognised the need for EPs to be involved at an earlier stage to complete graduated assessments to support early intervention. Yet in reality EPs were not utilised, for example Sam reflected on her lack of involvement at an earlier stage:

> Sam: *"so were in a position of catch up in terms of assessment or advice….you often think well if we can look back retrospectively, could more be done at earlier point."* (sic)

As stated in the 'negative experiences' subtheme, both John and Sam saw their roles to identify the young person's needs to support them to continue to access education in a mainstream setting. Sam also felt that EPs could also help provide advice and support by assessing needs and providing evidence-based interventions. Assessment was seen as of vital importance to the entry and exit criteria and to inform panel's decision, professionals perceived the EPs had the correct skill set to provide trustworthy assessments. However, in practice it was perceived that knowledge of the service and those links between SEMH, and SEN prevented schools from accessing EPs. Participants also reflected on the barriers to accessing the service, thus preventing EPs to be part of the graduated assessment. This included limited EP time, perception of the EP role, pace of EP support, perception of the young person's behaviour, the perception around EP capacity and the school's willingness to go through the process to access EP support.

The findings emphasized that whilst assessment was invaluable the EP role could be utilised for mores systemic work subsequently having a greater impact. For example, Sam felt that

EPs could support provision in APs, whilst James believed that strategic support for the senior leaders to develop policy and practice would be useful from EPs.

Both James and Layla reflected that consultation to support staff-wellbeing would be invaluable in AP. Drawing on her experiences, Mary proposed the EP 'expertise' leaves the room with them. She perceived EPs would be more effective to work consultatively around a group of YP rather than a single child. Peter shared similar sentiments suggesting opportunity to discuss strategies e.g., through drop-in sessions, would support mainstream settings with YP.

Interestingly Sam perceived that working consultatively with schools to identify needs, would be an opportunity to provide schools with some learning through 'modelling', which they could later draw upon in similar cases. Furthermore, John reflected that 'virtual working' meant that it was quicker and more efficient to work with professionals consultatively and hopes that this will overcome some of the challenges to accessing the service.

4.2.5.2 Encouraging a Holistic Perspective:
Taking a holistic approach emerged throughout the data, participants reflected on the need for schools, APs and the AP Panel to take a holistic approach in this context. They perceived it was important to understand what was causing the behaviour and that this was achieved by viewing the young person and the situation more holistically.

> Sam: *"There's always stories…these children didn't just create difficulties…there's always an explanatory factor…and we owe them the chance to share that with us."*

Sam saw the EP role as helping YP to share their stories so that professionals would view them more holistically and perhaps change the perception around behaviour. Professionals believed one of the advantages of the AP Panel was that they could look at the young person from a holistic perspective. They perceived this was a direct result of having various professionals from different 'specialisms' attending the AP Panel. Despite EP's currently not attending the Panel, professionals perceived the EP role as essential and invaluable to the AP Panel as they could critically unpick some of the decisions made, change the narrative in the discussion and help to focus on meeting the child's needs.

> Grace: *"I think for many of these children, they have so many different needs to be able to identify that from a holistic point of view is critical to make the right decision. So I think EPs are very important in that..."*

For Grace, the EP role was essential to get the comprehensive perspective to ensure that needs can be identified and met appropriately. Professionals perceived the psychological formulations and holistic assessments provided by the EPs was invaluable and trustworthy. It was perceived as important to provide a holistic picture of the young person to help inform the decision. In particular, sharing psychological formulation with the AP Panel was seen as extremely useful and seen as impartial. Yet in practices Sam perceived decisions and discussions were often based on a description of behaviours rather than analysis of the situation.

4.2.5.3 EPs Changing the Perspectives:
In reference to 'encouraging a holistic perspective', participants reflected that by encouraging a holistic perspective in schools, in APs and at the AP Panel, EPs could change the narrative and perspectives of others. Professionals perceived the EP role important in changing the perspective:

> James: *"…the psychological effects of the life situation on the child and understand that when a child misbehaves in class it isn't necessarily down to them or their fault, it's about understanding and looking at the history of that child."*

James believed that the EP role was vital in changing the perspective by using psychology to inform others how key parts of a young person's life have impacted them. Equally, Peter felt the EP role was to help others see the reasons for presenting behaviours. He believed that having the opportunity to work alongside an EP could help to change the perspective. Others perceived that the EP role was essential to changing the perspective of the adults in the mainstream setting where the young person may be returning. For example, Layla reflected that it would be important that teachers received some EP training to help change their perspective. All EPs reflected on the importance of their role in changing the perspective using psychological formulation underpinned by theory and research. They believed that as EPs, they are trained to do this.

4.3 Local Authority Documentation

The following documents were explored (Appendices 9,10,11):

1. AP Quality Assurance Framework

2. AP Quality Assurance Document

3. AP Directory

As discussed in the methodology chapter, content analysis (CA) was used to analyse LA documentation. The 'recording units' of interest were based on the research questions and were 'Alternative provision', 'Alternative Provision Panel', 'referral', 'exclusion', 'Educational Psychologist' or an equivalent term. The software package NVivo was used to help code the data. Sentences containing the recording units were coded and analysed.

4.3.1 Findings

CA findings have been provided to compliment the semi-structured interviews; this aligns with the methodological approach. The strength of including analysis of LA documentation within the current research is that it provides further insight into the 'learning milieu' and 'program initiative'. All documents were searched for the 'recording units' of interests (Robson 2002).

The main findings to emerge included:

- The use of the term 'Alternative Provision' or equivalent terms (e.g., programme provider, in some case 'Y' was used to name a specific provision) was primarily used in reference to collaborative working, safeguarding, staff in AP, accountability, the young person, monitoring APs, health and safety and the AP offer (in total 161).

- The use of the term 'Alternative Provision Panel' or equivalent term (e.g., Panel) was used in reference to the referral form, dates, decisions and funding (in total 5).

- The term 'referral' was used in the three documents to discuss the referral procedure, consideration for referral, reasons for referral, referral data and referrer details (in total 19)

- The term exclusion or equivalent term was used in reference to exclusion data, risk of exclusion, exclusion linked to financial implications, exclusion policy and procedure in APs and timescales in exclusion (in total 7).

- The use of the term 'Educational Psychologist' or equivalent term (e.g., 'professional involved in statutory process') was used in EP involvement on the referral form (in total 2).

4.4 Summary of Findings

Triangulation of findings is a crucial feature of IE (Burden 2008); this part of the chapter aims to summarise the findings bringing together the analysis from several sources in relation to the research questions.

4.4.1 Summary of findings: Research Question 1

1) How do key professionals view the use of AP as a preventative approach to school permanent exclusion?

The themes highlighted the need for careful consideration when using AP as a preventative approach to permanent exclusion. Consideration included the young person's needs and voice, a requirement of an entry and exit criteria and for all key professionals to work collaboratively with the YP and their family. However, professionals' experiences suggested a difference between the rhetoric and practice, where there was a limited criteria and the YP's voice was often overshadowed by financial constraints or the interests of the school community. LA documentation emphasised collaborative working and YP's needs, views, aspirations, and rights. The documentation also emphasised accountability and responsibility of ensuring the quality of provision in AP.

Interviews indicated APs were often seen as a last resort and a 'holding pen' to provide the school with respite. Participants reflected on factors resulting in the use of AP. These factors included the lack of early identification and intervention, adult attitudes, understanding of behaviour and the link to SEN, and school structures. However as emphasized by the findings the complexity of the socio-political climate, pressure and expectations of mainstream settings is also a contributory factor in the use of AP for those at risk of permanent exclusion. Nonetheless, the viewpoints suggested that AP successfully provided a 'nurturing' environment with an appropriate and engaging curriculum which re-engaged YP with their learning and supported their well-being. However, this was dependent on the investment of the young person and the reasons they perceived they were attending AP e.g., YP were less likely to participate in AP if this was seen as a sanction.

4.4.2 Summary of Finding: Research Question 2:

2) What are professionals' perceptions of the AP Panel as an effective process for accessing AP?

Decision making was critical in the process in the AP Panel. Findings highlighted that several factors could influence the decisions made by panel members. Factors included the information presented at the panel, subjectivity, being able to ask challenging questions to elicit information and to challenge perspectives. Unanimously professionals perceived that YP were also at the heart of the decision making. Factors such as the YP's voice, needs and presenting behaviour were considered in the decision-making. The challenges the young person proposed for the school community was also considered as a factor in the decision making.

Documentary analysis suggested that there was limited information about the AP Panel in the documents analysed. The limited information was in relation to admin, e.g., the referral form, the date the case was brought to the AP panel, the AP panel's decision and funding. Referral procedures were mentioned across two of the documents. However, this again was linked to admin and procedures for non-attendance. Similarly, the interviews also highlight the lack of transparency surrounding the AP Panels; this was suggested by non-panel members. However, there was also a lack of transparency surrounding emergency AP Panels and contradictions in the transparency of Panel's decisions. There were also some contradictions surrounding how panel members experiences and knowledge is valued during the meetings. Despite this, the strengths of the panel included schools' investment, a holistic panel membership, and being able to have an AP Panel as an initiative. Findings proposed panel membership should be extended to social care and others with SEN knowledge and experience.

4.4.3 Summary of Findings: Research Question 3:

3) How do key professionals think the AP panel could be further developed?

Following the data analysis of both the interviews and LA documentation, vital points were identified, and the following recommendation for practice were formulated:

1. Clear policies and guidance on using AP, and access via AP Panel.

2. Greater awareness and teaching surrounding the rights of YP and their voice.

3. On-going evaluation of panel practices and outcomes

4. Extending panel membership & valuing all panel members

5. Improving information presented to the AP Panel.

6. Transparency around AP Panels and improving decision-making.

These recommendations have been discussed in further detail in the discussion chapter.

4.4.4 Summary of Findings: Research Question 4:
4) How do key professionals think EPs can support in this context to ensure the best outcomes for YP?

EPs were viewed as highly experienced professionals who would provide a holistic picture of the young person by identifying strengths and needs and critically unpicking decisions made. The findings highlight that EPs have a vital role to play in the early graduated assessment and intervention. However, EPs within the study reflected that a lack of early involvement from SEN services meant that assessment was being completed at a crisis point in AP. Documentary analysis suggests EPs were only mentioned as a 'tick box' on the referral form, thus supporting the findings from the interviews regarding the lack of EP involvement.

Professionals saw the EP role as essential to encourage a holistic perspective by using psychological formulation to change the perspective. EPs and other professionals saw the EP role as more than just statutory assessment and believed the EP role could support provision and staff well-being in APs. Despite EPs not attending the AP Panel the findings propose that professionals perceived the EP role as invaluable in the decision making. Furthermore, experiences of professionals also indicated EPs could be useful in supporting the transition to AP and advocating for vulnerable YP and their families.

4.5 Chapter Summary
The chapter has presented the findings of the data from all sources of evidence: semi-structured interviews and LA documentation, with a brief explanation of the methods used to analyse these sources. The chapter concluded with a triangulation of findings in relation to the research questions.

The next chapter will discuss these findings in relation to the research questions, the previous research, the legislation, and the psychological theory discussed in the literature review.

5. Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore the access and use of Alternative Provision (AP) as a preventative approach to those at risk of permanent exclusion. The research also aims to explore the role of the EP in this context. Initial observations were completed, Local Authority (LA) documentation was collected, and key professionals were interviewed. The data was analysed using Thematic Analysis (TA) (Braun and Clarke 2012) and Content Analysis (CA) (Robson 2002).

This chapter will outline the main themes identified through the data analysis concerning each research question (Table 4). The chapter will then explore the themes linked to the research questions and discuss findings in the context of the relevant literature and psychological theory. In line with Illuminative Evaluation (IE) (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Parlett, 1974; Jamieson et al., 1977; Burden, 2008), this will also include a triangulation of both interview and documentation analysis.   In answer to research question 3, recommendations resulting from the findings of research questions 1 and 2 will be discussed.

In line with stage 5 of IE, key findings were shared in a meeting with the LA on 9th July 2021. The meeting provided an opportunity for discussion of the findings and the development of next steps. The final part of this chapter will provide an overview of the LA's response and the agreed actions.

5.2Discussion of analysis in relation to the Research Questions:

Table 4 outlines the main findings for research questions 1, 2, and 4 from both interviews and LA Documentation analysis. The table also outlines recommendations for research question 3 based on the findings from 1 and 2.

Table 4: Overview of Main Findings and Recommendations

Research Questions:	1) How do key professionals view the use of APs as a preventative approach to school permanent exclusion?	2) What are professionals' perceptions of the AP Panel as an effective process for accessing AP?	3) How do key professionals think the AP panel could be further developed?	4) How do key professionals think Educational Psychologists (EPs) can support in this context to ensure the best outcome for YP?
Themes proposed from interviews with key professionals	• Use of Alternative Provision • Alternative Provision vs Mainstream • Young Person's Needs	• Alternative Provision Panel • Use of Alternative Provision	**The key recommendations based on the findings:** 1. Clear policy and guidance on accessing and using AP via the AP Panel. 2. Greater awareness and teaching surrounding the rights of YP and their voice. 3. Ongoing evaluation of panel practices and outcomes 4. Extending panel membership & valuing all panel members 5. Improving information presented to the AP panel 6. Transparency around AP Panels and improving decision making	• The role of the Educational Psychologist • Young Person's needs. • Use of Alternative Provision
Key Points from analysis of LA documentation	Emphasis placed on: • Young people • Accountability and responsibility of APs, schools, and LA. • Quality of provision	• Lack of information surrounding the AP Panel. • Emphasis on admin procedures.		• EPs were mentioned as 'tick box' on the referral form.

5.3 Discussion of Research Question 1

How do key professionals view the use of APs as a preventative approach to school permanent exclusion?

5.3.1 Findings in relation to literature review

The discussion for research question 1 will be structured around the salient themes of the findings:

- Use of Alternative Provision

- Alternative Provision Vs Mainstream

- Young Person's Needs

Use of Alternative Provision

Professionals perceived success was experienced in AP for those at risk of permanent exclusion when there was a dual placement between school and AP. Dual placement was reliant on multi-agency collaboration and joint working between school and AP. Collaboration was underpinned by clear and effective communication, sharing relevant information, and good practice. These findings support the literature from Taylor's report (2012), which suggest AP is most effective when it is seen as an integral part of the education system rather than on the periphery. Findings also implied that when APs were used successfully, schools had maintained accountability and responsibility for YP. LA documentation supported that accountability and collaborative working was given the most importance. Findings imply the lack of commitment and investment from schools is where problems arise.

Similarly, Pennacchia & Thompson's (2016) research highlighted the importance of the commitment and responsibility by schools who provide the vital infrastructure which is essential for success. However, both the current research and previous literature suggests a continued variability in practice where sometimes YP are only attending the AP (Taylor 2012; Thompson & Pennacchia, 2016). In the current research, a professional described this as 'offloading'. This has also been described as the 'out of sight out of mind' approach in the literature (Thompson & Pennacchia, 2016). 'Offloading' was not simply implied to the physical transference of the YP to AP but the responsibility. Failure to work collaboratively with AP would continue to fuel this narrative. However, in contradiction, another professional perceived that this was a by-product of the school trying to meet the YP's needs.

The analysis highlighted that APs were often used as a 'holding pen' for assessment, as a last resort, and to provide the school with respite from 'challenging behaviour'. These findings

resonated with the findings from Gazeley (2010) and Briggs (2010). Despite these articles written over a decade ago, the findings suggest that the previous literature is still relevant. This is alarming given the change in statutory guidance around SEN and AP (DfE, 2013; DfE/DoH, 2015). More positively, APs being used as a last resort may be indicative of schools exhausting all options (Briggs 2010; Mills & Thompson 2018) and in line with the social inclusion agenda (Brown, 2018).

The current research noted challenges with accessing specialist provision might contribute to the increased use of AP. It was perceived easier to access AP than apply for a statutory assessment to access a special school. This may explain why APs are being used as a 'holding pen' in the current research. Similarly, Bryant et al. (2018) research implied APs were used as a 'holding' measure until other provision was allocated, however, this was also often due to the lack of specialist provision available.

Nonetheless, the notion of 'respite' and 'holding pen' brings into question the young person's rights. Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states the fundamental rights to an education based on equal opportunity (Bryson, 2010; Tilson & Oxley, 2020). Yet, it is questionable whether the use of AP in this context fits with the rights perspective? When AP is used in this context, it can be seen as colluding with exclusionary practices, subsequently not aligning with YPs' rights.

Findings implied the requirement of an explicit entry and exit criteria for using AP within the LA, the most crucial factor in the entry criteria was YP's needs matching AP. However, lack of provision made this challenging in practice, resounding with the findings of Thomas & Pennacchia (2016). In their study AP was selected as it was already in place rather than meeting the needs. Statutory guidance suggests exclusions should trigger a holistic assessment (DfE, 2012) and whilst the findings propose assessment should occur before YP are placed in AP, in practice this was unlikely to happen. Assessment prior to AP use may potentially reduce AP being used as a 'holding pen'. Mills & Thompson (2018) highlight that APs were seen to carry out assessments on the referral as assessment was missing, inaccurate or out of date.

Other important considerations included the young person's interests and voice, clear timescales and a supported transition both in and out of AP. These were similar to the

recommendations made in the literature (Taylor, 2012; Atkinson and Rowley, 2019; Fitzsimmons et al., 2019). The UNCRC articles 12 and 13 specify the right for a young person to express their views, and for these views to be considered. Findings propose the young person's motivation was imperative in the success of AP, therefore their voice must underpin the use of AP as a preventative approach to permanent exclusion.

Alternative Provision Vs Mainstream

Comparisons were made between AP and mainstream settings, with a resounding emphasis that 'one size does not fit all'. Perceptions suggested the complexity in mainstream settings has led to the increased use of AP. Bryson (2010) disagrees with the current education system, suggesting it attempts to shape the young person to fit the system rather than better meeting needs. Subsequently, in this context, APs are seen to uphold the rights of YP (Bryson, 2010). Yet it could also be argued AP reinforces the 'failure' of the education system. The current research highlighted that AP's curriculum and pedagogical approaches supported YP to re-engage with their learning. A bespoke curriculum with the opportunity to explore both GCSEs and vocational interest were contributing to the success of AP.

These findings contradict the findings in the literature review that options provided in AP did very little to assist young people to meet their aspirations (McCluskey et al., 2015; Russell & Thompson 2011). Interestingly there was an emphasis in the findings that AP helped prepare YP for adulthood by teaching them the life skills needed to contribute to society and lead a meaningful life. These findings were similar to Thomas and Pennacchia (2016) where YP took part in outdoor excursions to support social inclusion and teach responsibility.

Despite these positive findings, there was a noted variability in practice in teacher qualification. Such inequality is striking and has significant consequences for vulnerable YP. McCluskey et al. (2015) suggest the variability in practice in AP is a result of APs trying to meet the needs of YP in flexible and person-centred ways; this creates a likelihood of inconsistency, and inevitably increases inequality.

Relationships between YP and adults were also deemed much stronger, supportive, and positive in AP settings. The findings propose this was attributed to YP believing they felt listened to, respected, adults attuned to their interests and shared their interests with YP. Positive relationships were also fostered through relatability and a genuine understanding of

the young person's hardships outside of the classroom. These findings resonate with Fitzsimmons et al. (2019), who emphasise attunment and reciprocity in relationships, and that it required higher investment and resiliency from the teachers. Interestingly the current findings highlighted that the relationships between home and school were also crucial. Relationship breakdown between these two systems was cited as a contributing factor in using AP. Brown (2018) also highlighted the perceived importance in the relationship between professionals and families, and for families to be part of collaborative partnerships and joint decision making.

In addition, the current school climate was attributed to the increased use of AP; this included setting size, capacity, time, resources required to meet the YP's needs and build positive, meaningful relationships. It was suggested that those who are not academic do not thrive and that academic attainment often takes over the priority of relationships. The findings propose this was due to the socio-political climate of the current education system. Specific reference was made to the pressure schools are under for exam results, financial constraints, and limited access to resources. The literature review outlined the socio-political climate and the impact this has had on exclusions and subsequent use of AP (Ogg and Kaill, 2010; House of Commons Education Committee, 2018). Schools are required to work flexibly and creatively with less resources, the research highlighted this is a challenge for schools.

Young Person's Needs

In the current research presenting behaviour was perceived as a direct result of unmet needs. The findings resonated with The House of Commons Education Committee (2018) inquiry, that the lack of early identification and intervention was a contributing factor in increasing school exclusions and subsequent use of AP. McCluskey et al. (2015) acknowledged from their findings that the lack of early identification and preventative work alongside punitive behaviour management isolates vulnerable YP. Several reasons were acknowledged in the research contributing to the lack of early identification and intervention.

Perceptions propose there is a fine line between behaviour and SEN, where YP with SEN are perceived as 'naughty and 'disruptive'. This was attributed to the change in legislation (DfE, 2015). The findings suggest the link between behaviour and SEN may still be 'murky' in secondary schools, with school staff finding it challenging to recognise SEN vs behaviour.

Furthermore, the research emphasised the labelling of behaviour as 'naughty' was likely to impact the decision in type of support offered and whether SEN was identified. Similarly, Gazeley (2010) proposes how behaviour is constructed can limit the access to appropriate interventions. In addition, Menzies and Baars (2015) suggest that labelling behaviour does nothing more than act as a barrier to the social inclusion of a group of marginalised YP.

In contrast, the findings highlighted the complexity of staff experiences, expertise, and confidence to adapt to meet complex needs resulted in these perceptions or attributions of behaviour. Professionals in the current research also noted the demands on teachers to meet complex needs in the current socio-political context, similar findings were also highlighted by Trotman et al., 2019. In addition, Cole et al. (2019) findings suggest that progress 8 made it more challenging for teachers to respond to cognitive, social, and emotional needs for at-risk YP and drew staff attention away from identifying and addressing SEN. Being mindful about the positionality of schools, Hampton & Ramoutar (2021) imply that we must understand the climate teachers are experiencing whilst developing a supportive culture rather than creating a moral outrage.

The systems within schools were also identified as a barrier to identifying needs, two systems were specifically referred to: the 'pastoral' and 'SEN' systems. The route via these two different school systems and the power dynamics may determine whether SEN is identified, and needs are met appropriately. Similar findings propose that the lack of communication between two systems resulted in a lack of EP involvement (Bagley & Hallam 2017). In contradiction to these findings, Mills and Thompson (2018) research suggested that referrals to AP typically included a discussion between Senior leadership, SENCos, and teaching staff.

Training was identified as a method to help support schools to provide early identification and intervention to YP. There was a unanimous emphasis on the need for training to be ongoing. However, this required school staff to acknowledge the need for training and for the entire school community to recognise and accept supporting SEN as a collective responsibility. Staff investment in training was seen as crucial to this.

5.3.2 Social model of Disability and Findings
Applying the social model of disability (Oliver 2004) to the current findings, I propose that it is often the systems the young person is enshrined in which disenables them from accessing

a socially inclusive environment (Simplican et al., 2015) rather than their needs. Factors disenabling them include lack of early identification and intervention through assessment, school systems and power dynamics, adult perceptions and understanding of behaviour, focus on attainment and performance, poor relationships which have broken down, narrowing of the national curriculum and pedagogical approaches (House of Commons Committee 2018; Cole et al., 2019). Most importantly, the current research findings emphasised that adult attitudes and mindsets in mainstream settings were barriers to social inclusion. In contradiction, Malcolm (2019) states that in some cases, AP can play a positive role in a young person's educational experiences, and for these individuals, AP can be far more inclusive than mainstream setting. As highlighted by the research, 'one size does not fit all', and keeping these YP in a mainstream setting can be exclusionary.

5.3.3 The Eco-systemic Theory and Findings

The findings have also been considered in relation to the Eco-systemic perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Several factors have been highlighted as contributing to the use of AP as a preventative approach to school exclusion. The findings have also highlighted factors that should be considered and perhaps are not (e.g., entry and exit criteria). It is imperative that if AP is used, these factors and their impact on the young person and their rights are considered. The Eco-systemic perspective, alongside the findings and literature, emphasises the need for YP to be identified through a timely assessment followed by appropriate intervention. This requires school leaders to work closely with all agencies and families for YP at risk of school exclusion, including targeted support for vulnerable groups and individuals (Cole et al., 2019). There is also an emphasis on challenging the negative narrative and discourse surrounding YP and their families (Bagley & Hallam, 2017). These views align themselves with the eco-systemic perspective. The contribution of legislation, statutory guidance and policy in the 'Exo-system', alongside the socio-political climate in the 'Macro-system', should also not be underestimated in the role they play in increasing school exclusions and use of AP. Schools and LAs are required to think creatively to support YP to access an inclusive education on a restricted budget. Furthermore, the research emphasised the importance of environmental changes ('chronosystem'), as a result the transition in and out of AP should be supported and considered in both the entry and exit criteria.

5.4 Discussion of Research Question 2

What are professionals' perceptions of the AP Panel as an effective process for accessing AP?

The discussion for research question 2 will be structured around the salient themes of the findings:

- Alternative Provision Panel

5.4.1 Themes and Discussion
Alternative Provision Panel

A gap in the literature identified little is known about the processes in LAs to access AP (Mills & Thompson, 2018; Trotman et al., 2019). Each LA has its own protocols that may affect the 'referral process' differently. The inquiry led by the House of Commons Education Committee (2018) propose that there is a significant variation in how these panels are run, managed and how well they work. A variation may be explained by the need for each LA to be flexible to the population (e.g., demographics, socio-economic status). Burden (2008) notes that it is challenging to remove Seabreeze (the 'learning milieu') from AP Panel (the 'program initiative'). Seabreeze is situated in a deprived area of the West Midlands (please see 3.6.2 'the learning milieu' in the methodology chapter for a full description). The AP Panel was developed following concerns of the rising number of YP attending AP (Table 2) and the lack of accountability for professionals placing YP in AP.

The AP Panel has several purposes, the first being a sense of regulation and governance. The use of AP was perceived as being based on rash decisions, with less thought given to additional interventions to maintain placement in a mainstream setting. The LA was also unaware of these placement moves, causing concerns around safeguarding. There was also a financial implication to reducing AP placements as spending increased significantly in 2018/19 (table 2). The lack of responsibility and accountability by commissioners of APs (e.g., schools and LAs) was highlighted as a cause for concerns in the literature (Ofsted, 2011; Taylor 2012; Malcolm 2019, Timpson Review 2019) and was addressed by the DfE with changes in statutory guidance (DfE, 2012; 2013). However, much of this guidance remains inapplicable to academies. There was a strong sense of accountability and responsibility when professionals discussed the AP Panel. Professionals saw their role and the Panel's purpose to challenge schools to ensure that AP was in the young person's best interest. However, this is challenging in itself

to maintain given the socio-political climate where Academies have more autonomy and less accountability.

Quality assurance and monitoring of APs was also perceived as vital to the Panels purposes. It was seen as essential that the AP Panel monitored provision to ensure that YP's needs were met and academic, social, and emotional progress was made. Despite the limited information surrounding the referral process, the need for quality assurance in APs is well documented (Taylor, 2012; DfE 2013; Thompson & Pennacchia 2016; Tate & Greatbatch 2017).

The decision making of whether to use AP was also perceived as a part of the AP Panel purposes. Several crucial factors were identified as contributing to the decisions made at the AP Panel. One of the factors was the information that is presented at Panel. Findings suggests information provided to the Panel should be based on a period of graduated assessment and evidence of what intervention has been provided. Similar to this process, the SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2015) states the need for a graduated assessment (plan, do and review cycle) to inform provision. Nonetheless, information from professionals from Seabreeze (e.g., EPs) was highly valued and contributed to decisions made. These findings resonated with the findings from Rowe's (2019) research which proposes schools could only refer YP if the EP had been involved. Thus, suggesting the EP role was hugely important to the process. However, in this context, information provided could be limited, often based on 'hearsay', and subjective with little or no involvement from the EP. The subjectivity of panel members experiences was also questioned. Having a safe space to challenge one another was paramount to decision making.

Another critical factor in the decision making was the young person, including their voice, needs and behaviour. Behaviours perceived as 'violent' or that put others in the school community at risk influenced the AP Panel's decision. One could infer from these situations that the rights of other YP to access a safe education outweighs the rights of another young person. Tilson & Oxley (2020) note that some circumstances in which the 'weighty interests' of others in the school community may outweigh another young person's rights. However, they question the morality behind decisions to exclude YP in the 'weighty interest' of others in the community. Tilson & Oxley (2020) propose that whilst this may be legal, is this moral? Subsequently, it is questionable whether this should enter the decision making. However, it was

recognised in the current research schools are sometimes left with a moral dilemma and no other option but to either exclude or seek alternatives for some YP.

Given these findings, it is questionable whether YP's voice and rights are at the heart of the decision making or whether this is tokenistic? Professionals believe this should be at the heart of the decisions, but contradictions in the findings suggest it is often not. In addition, analysis implies that often financial implications may also outweigh the young person's voice. Similarly, research implies that in cases where financial restraints are the guiding principles, AP may not be necessarily selected in the needs and interests of the YP (Pennacchia & Thompson, 2016). Professionals are often provided with these dilemmas due to reduced budgets in education, causing a lack of resources (House of Commons Education Committee, 2018). With continued reduced funding, it is challenging for schools to think and work more creatively. The findings and literature imply and return to the emphasis of early identification and intervention (Bagley & Hallam 2017). Rather than using AP as a last resort and as 'provision', could APs be used more preventatively as an 'intervention'? Mills and Thompson (2018) propose that financial constraints have played a role in using AP as a last resort.

Furthermore, several strengths and issues for consideration of the AP panel emerged from the findings of this research. The first was around panel membership; professionals perceived those attendees had the broad perspective needed to make decisions. Attendance from various professionals with various skills, knowledge and expertise meant the Panel could have a holistic perspective of the child. This knowledge meant that the decision made was much more likely to be effective than a single person with only their knowledge and experience. Having a diverse panel increases the likelihood of decisions based on a holistic picture of the young person.

However, with the lack of attendance from social care services, and specialists in SEN (e.g., advisory teachers or EPs), it is questionable whether the Panel genuinely have a holistic picture of the young person. Findings imply the invitation to attend the AP Panel should be extended to social care professionals and professionals with expertise in SEN, who have knowledge of APs and barriers to accessing a mainstream setting.

The findings imply panel members were able to communicate and express their views, they felt valued, and that the AP Panel was a safe space to challenge perspectives. However, in

contradiction there was a perception that not all expertise and knowledge were utilised at the AP Panel. This was attributed to a potential hierarchy unintentionally created by job titles. Relationships and collaborative working have been highlighted as fundamental when working in this context (Pennacchia & Thompson, 2016). Pennacchia and Thompson (2016) explored the relationships and collaborative working between APs and schools; however, this is still applicable between panel members. If professionals feel less valued than others, the AP Panel risks some professionals not sharing vital viewpoints, contributing to problem analysis and solutions (Mills & Thompson, 2018). As reflected in the findings, "*I don't know why I bother*", shows the potential of losing experienced and valuable panel members if the power balances are not carefully managed. Removing power imbalances is important to ensure collaboration, this includes being non-judgmental, and offering time and space for professionals to share their viewpoints. Research also suggested that being equal helped to foster positive relationships (Mills & Thompson; 2018).

Delays in the AP Panel due to YP being forward to different panels in the LA was seen as problematic. Other concerns surrounded the emergency panel. The lack of transparency around these panels was in question. There was no reference to these panels in the LA documentation. Subsequently, does this undermine intentions and purposes outlined of the AP Panel. The issues around transparency also extended to the AP Panel itself. Non-panel members did not know about the processes (e.g., entry and exit criteria) and how decisions were made. Transparency in the 'referral processes' and the impact on relationships have also been noted in the literature (Mills & Thompson, 2018).

On a more positive note, panel members perceived strength of the AP Panel was the relationship they had with schools and APs. They managed the power dynamics carefully and believed schools valued the AP Panel. These findings contradict the literature that implies the 'purchaser-provider relationship' impacts the ability to challenge one another in practice and that there are significant issues between the communication between Schools, LAs & APs (Pennacchia & Thompson 2016). In line with the findings, Mills and Thompson (2018) research highlighted that the 'referral process' is dependent on relationships. Professionals in their study reported positive relationships, with a genuine sense of collaboration, open, trusting, and equal relationships.

5.5 Discussion of Research Question 3:
How do key professionals think the AP panel could be further developed?

The answer to this research question was based on a combined analysis of both the interview and documentary analysis, the following recommendations are to support and develop practices in the AP referral process. A proposed model for the referral process for the current LA is also presented (figure 6).

5.5.1 Recommendations for Practice
The key recommendations based on the findings:

1. **Clear policy and guidance on accessing and using AP via the AP Panel.**

The findings and literature emphasise having clear guidance and policies within LAs to support those at risk of school exclusion and subsequently using AP (Mills & Thompson 2018, Trotman et al., 2019). Whilst the findings from both sources suggested there was limited information regarding the 'entry and exit criteria' and accessing AP via AP panel, enforcing one may reduce the personalisation required for each young person as needs and circumstances vary. However, some of the following suggestions emerged from the research, which I believe would strengthen accessing AP via Panel and the use of AP:

APs to be used as dual placements where responsibility is shared by school and AP, supported by the LA. Within this, there needs to be a sense of collaboration through multi-agency working and sharing good practice to support the YP. There should be careful consideration to reduce the potential of the 'out of sight out of mind' approach (Taylor 2012; Pennacchia and Thompson 2016). Some factors for the LA to consider include, who will remain as key contact from school, how will responsibility and excellent practice be shared, how can we maintain effective communication and collaboration?

Holistic assessment before entry into AP would allow professionals to match the YP needs to the most appropriate AP. It would also help inform the discussion at a panel about whether AP would be a suitable placement based on strengths and needs. LA and school to consider whether assessment could be completed by an impartial professional to help reduce the subjectivity.

Relationships with families have been reported in the findings to have often broken down between home and school. Families in these situations can become disengaged in the

process. Families and YP need to have a key worker who can advocate for them and ensure collaboration between school, LA and AP. Families and YP should also be supported to understand their rights and processes in the decision making (Russell & Thompson 2011).

Clear timeframes of how long a young person will spend in AP should be based on ongoing assessment and collaboration between professionals, the family, and the young person.

Supported transition in and out, the support again should be based on strengths and needs of the YP and must include collaboration between AP school or post 16 settings. Each young person's needs and circumstances will vary; therefore, the transition support should be personalised to the YP. Some YP may require more transition support than others. However, this should be planned.

YPs' investment was considered essential by professionals; the LA should consider how YP are supported to see AP as the best option and not the last option. AP should be used as a positive and not part of a sanction. Keyworkers in the school and LA to consider how they can support YP to access AP linking to their current strengths, interests and future aspirations.

2. Greater awareness and teaching surrounding the rights of YP and their voice

The UNCRC (1989), Children and Families Act (2017) and the SEND Code of Practice (DfE/DoH, 2015) are significant pieces of legislation that emphasise the young person's rights to be part of the decision making and matters arising that impact them. They should be made aware of the process so they can understand them and make informed choices. As YP presented to the AP Panel are above the age of 13, they should be consulted on matters concerning them, and they should give informed consent. Their views should be sought as a minimum. The LA should consider how the young person's views are sought for the referral process; how are they collected, by who and when. The next step includes the LA to consider how their views are shared authentically in the AP process. Views of the young person must link to their current strengths, interests, and future aspirations. The LA should identify a professional who attends the AP Panel to meet with the YP before Panel to ascertain their voice in a meaningful way.

Given the findings around school staffs' attributions and attitudes towards behaviour and the link between SEN and behaviour, the LA may need to consider how they can bring greater awareness and teaching of the young person's rights in school. Bringing awareness also includes ensuring that all professionals working in school see SEN as their responsibility (DfE/DoH, 2015). Training, development of policy and implementation would be crucial in this process (Swinson 2010; Griffiths 2020; Tilson & Oxley 2020).

3. Ongoing evaluation of panel practices and outcomes

Accessing AP through 'program initiatives' such as the AP Panel must be effective in supporting YP, families and schools with the best interest and rights of the young person at the forefront of decisions made. The LA must continue to evaluate panel practices and the outcomes for YP. Potential ways to achieve this include:

Firstly, use data to explore in more depth how many YP are placed in AP directly through school vs the AP panel. This will indicate how much schools are buying into this process. Data to also explore the longer-term outcomes for YP who have been through the AP Panel. Little is known about the longer-term outcomes of 'referral processes' (Mills & Thompson, 2018).

Secondly, use ongoing evaluations on accessing AP through the AP Panel from the perspective of YP and their families. Previous research indicated that families and YP perceived they did not understand the referral processes or receive any support (Mills & Thompson, 2018; Rowe 2019).

Thirdly inviting other professionals to scrutinise the Panel's decision. E.g., professionals from schools, APs and other LAs. Scrutiny from non-panel members could offer advice for how panel could be further developed, this may also be less subjective.

The LA may also wish to visit other LAs to explore similar program initiatives and share good practice. Sharing good practice across different LAs will help to improve the practice within Seabreeze.

4. Extending AP Panel membership and valuing panel members

This recommendation is based on findings within the research that suggested that panel membership could be extended and the need to draw on all panel members' knowledge and expertise. Panel membership was seen as one of the strengths of the AP Panel, expertise and

knowledge from different areas was seen as contributing to holistic and effective decision making. However, the LA should consider extending the invitation to social care and professionals with SEN experience and knowledge, e.g., advisory colleagues or EPs.

Power imbalances on the AP Panel was noted as an issue for consideration, and the LA should consider putting strategies in place to utilise the expertise and knowledge of all panel members. This will help to reduce the power imbalances and support all panel members to feel valued. Reducing the power imbalances may include continuing to ensure all panel members have had a chance to share their knowledge or thoughts, appreciating the effort some panel members have made to prepare paperwork, acknowledging, and respecting their viewpoints in the final decision.

5. **Improving information presented to the AP Panel.**

Information presented to the AP panel should be based on written evidence and ongoing graduated assessment. The information should be clear and concise on what intervention has been tried (e.g., when, how long, by who). In line with previous recommendations and legislation (UNCRC 1989; Children and Families Act 2014; DfE/DoH 2015), YPs' voice should be included in the information presented to the Panel. Their voice should be collected in a meaningful way and authentically shared with panel members.

6. Transparency around AP Panels and improving decision making

The findings suggest there needs to be some clear guidance and protocols for referral processes to be made available to all professionals in the LA and APs. There is some guidance on the referral process (Appendix 9). However it is likely, professionals have not seen this. The LA may wish to highlight guidance and protocols at a service meeting to provide an opportunity for professionals to ask questions and ultimately create transparency in accessing AP through the AP Panel. There also needs to be some clear guidance on the emergency panels, e.g., who attends, what constitutes an emergency?

Further transparency is also required surrounding the decision making. The LA may wish to set up a system where feedback can be provided to professionals involved with the YP who do not attend the AP panel. The opportunity to reflect after panels with professionals and explicitly state what influenced the decisions would be beneficial and support transparency.

Furthermore, Panel members should be aware of their subjectivity when reading information and making decisions. Continuing to challenge and ask questions at the Panel can help to reduce the subjectivity. It was also highlighted that the delays across the various panels in the LA might prevent YP from accessing AP as quickly as they require. The LA should consider the potential delays created in panel decisions.

A model for accessing Alternative Provision through the AP Panel for those at risk of school exclusion.
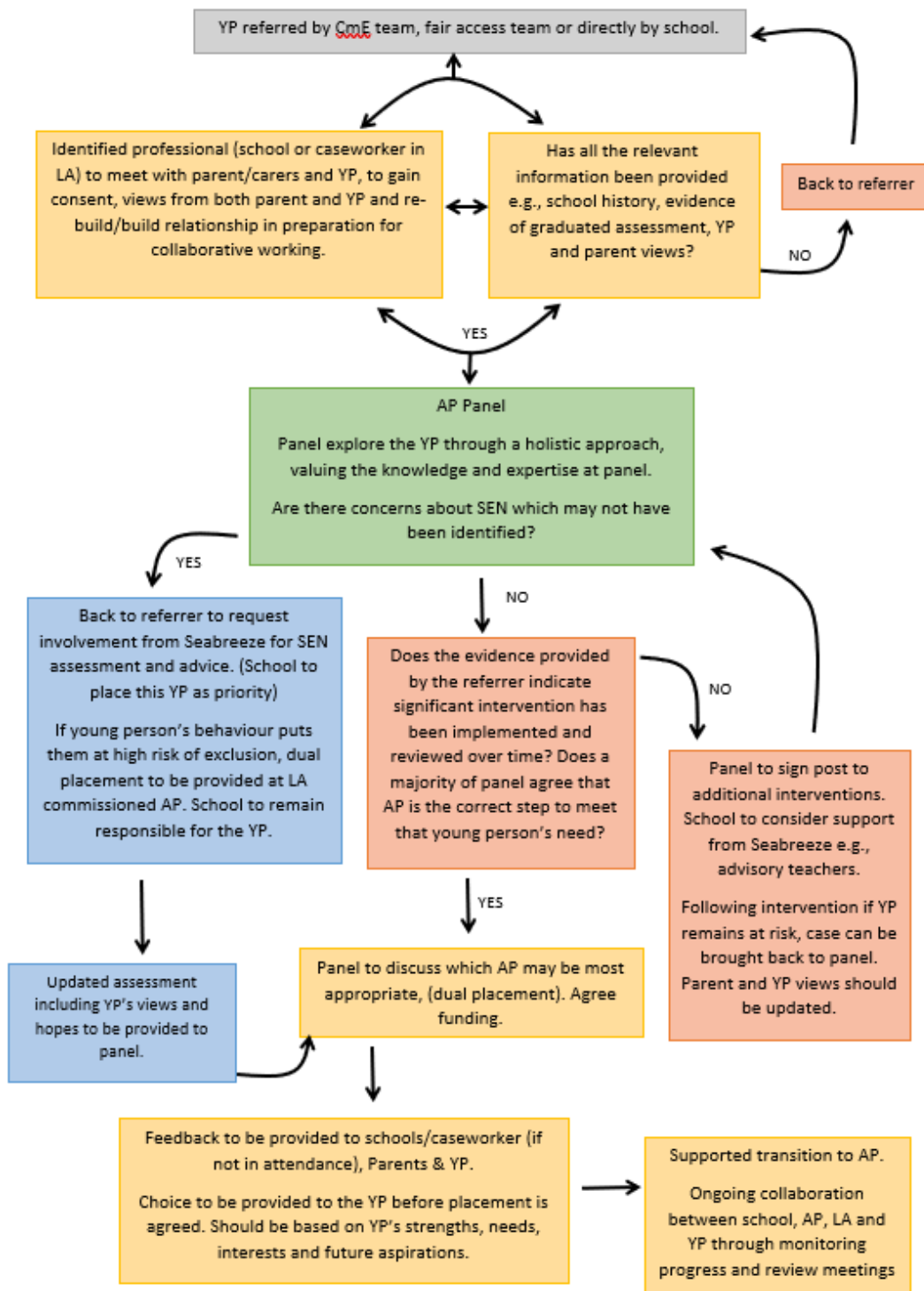
Figure 6: A Proposed Model for Accessing Alternative Provision through the AP Panel for YP at risk of Permanent Exclusion.

5.6 Discussion of Research Question 4:

How do key professionals think Educational Psychologists (EPs) can support in this context to ensure the best outcome for YP?

5.6.1 Themes and Discussion
The discussion for research question 4 will be structured around the salient themes of the findings:

- The role of Educational Psychologists

Whilst this was the specific theme that answered this research question, the findings suggest that the EP role is also linked to the themes 'The Young Person Needs' and 'The use of Alternative Provision'. Therefore, I will draw on the findings from these themes when discussing the role of the EP.

The role of Educational Psychologists

Linking to the theme 'The use of Alternative Provision', perceptions suggested it was the EP's role to maintain placement in a mainstream setting as this is where outcomes for YP were perceived as most successful. These findings resonate with points made by Bryson (2010), who states that placement in AP results in a lack of support from external agencies. He argues that YP in AP continue to receive inequity in support as they are outside of the institutional arrangements for development, care, and containment. The independent APs in Seabreeze ('learning milieu') do not receive allocated time from the EP service. Subsequently, neither staff nor YP is supported by EPs or advisory colleagues with SEN knowledge unless they have an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP). In this case, the level of support often remains minimum and limited to annual reviews.

The findings of the current research imply the EP role is crucial in the early identification of needs. Despite these viewpoints, in practice it was perceived that request for EP involvement would come at a crisis point, or when a statutory assessment was requested whilst the young person was attending AP. Similar findings were also identified by Bagley and Hallam (2017) in the context of managed moves; EP involvement was a reaction to a young person reaching a crisis point. Factors which may prevent access to the EP service were also considered. These barriers included understanding the links between behaviour and SEMH need, limited EP

time, the perception around the EP role and capacity, the pace of EP support and school willingness to go through the process to access an EP. Trotman et al. (2019) findings suggest the emphasis on multi-agency working and that EPs were essential in this. However, their research suggested that engaging and sustaining multi-agency work was challenging, and schools often took on the role of other professionals. This links back to the comments made by a professional in this research that teachers are expected to be everything to every child.

Perception surrounding the EP role has also been highlighted in the literature as a barrier to accessing an EP service (Bagley & Hallam, 2017). Bagley and Hallam's (2017) findings suggest that school staff were often unsure about the role of the EP, with perceptions indicating they saw the role as supporting 'learning' and not 'behaviour'. However, in contradiction to Bagley and Hallam's (2017) findings, professionals within this research valued the holistic nature of the EP role in supporting both learning and behaviour and the potential to support staff well-being in AP. Although EPs noted the lack of involvement in this context. Whilst professionals valued what the EP role could bring to this context, the research findings highlight limited EP involvement through both LA documentation and the interviews.

Findings from research question 1 proposes adult attitudes, perceptions, and attributions of behaviour impacted support. Professionals perceived the role of the EP to encourage a holistic perspective and to change the perspective of others using assessment and psychological formulation. These findings also resound with the findings in the literature that participants valued the holistic and systematic thinking EPs could provide to encourage others to think about the situation differently (Bagley & Hallam 2017). Other research highlighted the challenges within schools, e.g., school practices that conflict with a psychological understanding of behaviours, causes and potential ways to change it, making it challenging to implement change (Hampton & Ramoutar, 2021). However, professionals within the current research believed EPs could use psychological formulation to encourage holistic thinking and change the perspectives of others.

The perception of professionals implies EPs are well suited to work preventatively within school systems using consultation to influence change. However, it was inferred that when EPs leave the room, their expertise leaves with them. Perceptions suggested EPs would be better working more systemically rather than with single pieces of casework. Similarly, research places emphasis on EPs working systemically to improve policy and practice (Swinson

2010), providing group supervision for professionals (Maxwell 2013) and supporting evidence-based intervention (Rechten & Tweed 2014) to support those at most risk of school exclusion. Bagley and Hallam (2017) emphasise the importance of preventative work by EPs to avoid managed moves.

Interestingly it was inferred EPs could offer support to APs to improve their provision. AP professionals who took part in this study welcomed support from EPs. They believed that EPs would be invaluable in providing strategic support for senior leaders and support staff well-being. Similarly, Swinson (2010) proposes that supporting systemic change through policy and practice significantly improved relationships between staff and pupils. Whilst this was in the context of schools, this could still apply to AP settings. More recently, Griffiths (2020) implies the importance of the relational aspects of schools from the individual level to the systems and culture to support the vulnerable at risk of permanent exclusion.

In addition, the findings of this research highlighted professionals valued the EP's role in advocating for vulnerable families and YP, especially when relationships had broken down between schools and home. The trust and respect EPs build with families and schools, emphasized how invaluable and skilled EPs can be in this context. The children and Families Act (2014) and the SEND Code of Practice (DfE/DoH 2015) emphasises the importance of collaboration between families and professionals. Maxwell (2013) implies that working with professionals in a supervisory role can make a distinct contribution to the relationships between schools, families, and the wider community. Perhaps with time and capacity being a potential barrier for accessing support from the EP service, group supervision would be valuable to both schools and APs working with vulnerable families and YP. Both the literature and findings suggest that EPs have a vital role in reducing exclusions and subsequent use of AP. The implications for EP practice will be considered in the concluding chapter.

5.7 Local Authority Feedback and Response

In line with stage 5 of IE, the key findings were presented to the LA (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Parlett, 1974; Jamieson et al., 1977; Burden, 2008). A meeting was arranged for 9th July 2021 and was attended by several professionals within the LA. Appendix 13 highlights the agenda shared with the LA, a summary of findings and a write up of the discussion.

The meeting concluded with their initial thoughts. The professionals in attendance felt they would like to develop the following:

- o Greater awareness and learning around the young person's rights and ensuring that every decision made has the principles of the young person's rights at the forefront.

- o A greater emphasis on the voice of the YP in the 'referral process'. YP's voice to be collected and shared at the Panel, as this is something that is missing from the AP Panel.

- o Hold preparation meetings with families and YP to help ascertain their views and help them understand the 'referral process'. This will enable them to make informed choices. The professional to collect consent and views can then act as an advocate for parents/YP at the AP Panel.

- o Schools to attend the AP Panel to present their case; they can then be challenged and supported in person. This will help with transparency on panel decisions and support the schools with their practices.

- o Ongoing systemic work with schools to help develop streamlined systems between SEN and pastoral leads by ongoing development policy and implementation, training, and consultation.

5.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the findings in relation to the research questions, the literature and the theory presented in the literature review. It has also presented a model for accessing AP through the AP Panel. By following IE, feedback from the research was provided to the professionals in the LA. Their response has been outlined and provided in appendix 13.

To improve practice, we must be able to evaluate practice. There has been a resounding emphasis on the need for collaborative working, ensuring accountability, responsibility and the right and voice of the YP. The LA must continue to work on both the strengths and issues for consideration to ensure the effectiveness of the AP Panel.

The final chapter of this thesis will be presented as the conclusion; it will include an overview of the finding, strengths and limitations, quality criteria applied to this research and a personal reflection.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will begin with a summary of the findings, followed by the implications for both the LA and EPs in practice. The chapter will then focus on the quality criteria used to ensure the 'trustworthiness' and 'credibility' of this research. Strengths, limitations, and future research will then be considered. The chapter will conclude with a personal reflection and concluding remarks.

6.2 Summary of findings

Key findings from the research highlighted the essential factors which require consideration when accessing AP to prevent permanent exclusion and the role of the EP within this context. These factors should be considered by the Local Authority (LA), Schools and APs. Whilst 'statistical-probabilistic generalizability' was not a goal for this research, 'moderatum generalizations' proposes some of the findings within this research maybe recognisable and applicable to other schools, LAs & APs.

Several strengths emerged from the analysis surrounding accessing AP as a preventative approach to permanent school exclusion. Strengths surrounding the use of AP included participating in a meaningful curriculum, re-building positive relationships, preparing for adulthood, and developing a positive emotional wellbeing. Success was attributed to AP being used preventatively and as a dual placement. There was an emphasis on schools retaining accountability and responsibility for young people (YP). Collaboration between school, LA and AP were crucial in ensuring the successful outcome for YP. Collaboration was underpinned by effective communication, sharing of good practice, and the use of appropriate outside agencies, e.g., EPs or advisory teachers, police.

Despite the success in using AP to prevent permanent exclusion, practice often meant that APs were used as a holding pen for assessment or respite for schools. This raised several questions linked to the rights of the young person. Several contributory factors played a role in this: the lack of financial resources to meet needs, lack of early identification and intervention, expectation on teachers, school systems and the perceptions, attributions, and understanding of behaviour. The schools and the LA need to be aware of these factors, work collaboratively and creatively to ensure AP is used with the rights of the young person at the

forefront of decisions. This requires greater teaching and awareness of the young person's rights in both the LA and schools.

Further considerations also included the need for an entry and exit criteria for accessing AP. Caution needs to be applied in having such a criteria, as personalisation is crucial in supporting these YP. Factors that should be considered in the criteria included holistic assessment before entry into AP, supported transition, clear timeframes and YP's motivation, interests and aspirations. Again, this was underpinned by collaborative working between schools, LAs, APs, YP and families.

Similarly, accessing AP through the AP Panel also raised several strengths and issues which require consideration. Strengths of the AP panel included having a holistic panel whereby schools and APs are part of a robust system. In addition, the AP Panel was seen as holding accountability and responsibility to safeguard the welfare and progress of vulnerable YP. Despite not needing to submit to AP Panel, schools invested as they saw the value in this process. Professionals in the LA carefully managed the power dynamics between the LA, schools and APs. Whilst the AP Panel is still in its infancy, it is a good starting point for ensuring the responsibility of these YP. Issues for consideration raised questions linked to the voice of YP, the information presented to the panel and panel subjectivity. There were also some contradictions in viewpoints in utilising the expertise and knowledge of all panel members. Some felt they were not valued in the decision making. Furthermore, the lack of transparency of the AP Panel was felt by professionals who do not attend the AP panel. Therefore, further transparency and clarity is required, clarity is also required for the emergency panels.

EP's saw their role in maintaining placement in a mainstream setting through systemic and early preventative work. This was much more challenging in practice, with the request for EP involvement coming at a crisis point once the YP had begun attending AP. The EP role was valued in supporting early identification of needs, building relationships with YP and families and encouraging professionals in the schools, LAs and APs to view the situation from a holistic perspective. However, EPs were not always utilised due to several barriers identified in the research. These will require careful consideration by the LA if EPs continue to support school efficiently and effectively.

The findings of the research highlight the importance of ensuring and maintaining the rights of YP in practice and collaborative working. Both strengths and issues for consideration have highlighted possible areas for future development; strengths should be built on, and development points worked upon. The model proposed in the discussion chapter (figure 6) may be a helpful model or starting point for other LAs to consider. EPs can play a significant role in shaping the outcomes for YP at risk of permanent exclusion. The research has highlighted several barriers which must be considered. However, EPs are equipped to think creatively to support schools, the LA, APs and most importantly, the vulnerable YP and their families.

6.3 Implications for future practice

Illuminative Evaluation (IE) was used in this study to illuminate both the strengths and areas for development in accessing and using AP as a preventative approach to permanent exclusion. The research has provided several recommendations and an ideal model for the LA to improve the 'referral process'.

The intention of this research was not 'statistical generalisability' (Smith, 2018), however the term 'moderatum' generalisability felt more applicable. A discussion of the literature in chapter 5 (discussion) suggests some comparable and parallel findings within the current research. Both the literature and current research highlight similar themes; these similarities add weight for the findings and recommendations of this research to be a valuable starting point for other LAs, APs and EPs working in similar contexts. The transparency surrounding the 'learning milieu' in this research will help other professionals make informed decisions when considering how applicable the recommendations and proposed model (figure 6) is in their context.

6.3.1 Implications for the LA

The implications of this research for the LA have been discussed in detail in the recommendations for practice (5.5.1). This section will outline some of the salient points. Firstly, it would be beneficial for Seabreeze to explore and share good practice with other neighbouring LAs. Doing this will support the ongoing development of using APs and the AP Panel. Whilst national standardisation of 'referral procedures' have been considered, flexibility allows LAs to meet the needs of their population. Furthermore, as stated by IE, it is challenging to separate the 'learning milieu' from the 'program initiative'. Seabreeze

recognised the need for the AP Panel, whilst in some other LAs, the 'learning milieu' is likely to be different.

Further implications for the LA include the voice of YP, who may go through this process. The current research has discussed the rights of the YP in relation to the findings and literature. Subsequently, all professionals must consider the views of YP in the referral process. What are their experiences, how are they included in a meaningful way, how could processes become more person centred? Legislative frameworks emphasise the participation of YP in matters that concern them (The children and Families Act, 2014). Their views should be considered in evaluating practices, informing practice, and influencing the decisions made. Establishing the rights of YP in practice is the responsibility of all professionals; this requires a greater awareness and teaching of these practices (Bryson 2010). This implication is applicable in any 'learning milieu'. The model (figure 6) makes explicit reference to the YP's view, this should be authentically collected and considered through-out the referral process.

Another implication of the study on practice includes the early preventative work that is required in secondary schools. Maintaining placement was seen as paramount by EPs as this is where the young person is likely to experience more success. Early prevention means identifying needs, providing evidence-based interventions, and working collaboratively within school systems and with external agencies (Swinson 2010; Maxwell, 2013; Ratchen & Tweed 2014; Griffiths 2020). Early preventative work may include the use of AP. However, this should be based on a graduated assessment and the young person's voice, strengths, needs, interests, and future aspirations. In this context, schools must be responsible for the young person and continue to work collaboratively. The use of dual placement has been suggested by the research findings and the literature (Taylor 2012; Thompson & Pennacchia, 2016)) as a suggestion for future practice. In this context, AP would be seen as a prevention and intervention rather than a provision. Whilst this implication is directly related to schools, Seabreeze can play a vital role in supporting schools in systemic work to address the issues raised in this thesis.

6.3.2 Implications for EP Practice
There are several implications for EPs in practice to consider. Firstly, is the need for EPs to be involved proactively rather than when the situation is in a crisis. (Bagley & Hallam, 2017). Being proactive includes EPs working systemically with professionals in schools to have a

significant impact on a wider school community rather than a select few. Some suggestion includes offering group supervision (Maxwell, 2013) and supporting the development of policy and practice (Swinson, 2010; Tilson and Oxley 2020). Within the proactive work, there may also be a need for EPs to work with the school systems 'SEN' & 'pastoral' to support communication and identify potential needs. EPs could also work preventatively to avoid AP being required through graduated assessment and evidence-based intervention (Rechten & Tweed 2014). EPs may also find it beneficial to attend multi-agency meetings in schools, where YP could be highlighted from an earlier age (e.g., years 7 & 8) to begin preventative work to avoid fixed term exclusions. Collaborative working is fundamental in preventative work and for those vulnerable YP at risk of permanent exclusion (Trotman et al. 2019). Within preventative work, Bagley & Hallam (2017) recognise the importance of the EPs role not being misconstrued as applicable only within the 'traditional' narrow definition of SEN. Their views propose that EPs can be valuable working with complex YP with SEMH needs. EPs also play a fundamental role in ensuring the rights of YP are upheld and can challenge schools, LA professionals, and the AP Panel to ensure the views of professionals are accurate and support inclusion (Brown 2018).

Furthermore, given the salience of presenting an accurate and holistic picture of the YP at the AP Panel to ensure appropriate decisions can be made, EP involvement is essential. The AP Panel may also be a valuable meeting for the EPs to attend as EPs have an essential role in challenging negative narratives around YP (Bagley & Hallam 2017). There is a clear EP role in advocating for the rights of YP by conceptualising the nature of the difficulties. Unpicking the nature of difficulties includes the extent to which external factors are impinging upon a young person. EPs can draw upon theories within psychology to take a systemic view (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1979) or explore the barriers to social inclusion (e.g., social model of disability). EPs are uniquely well placed to operate within such frameworks (Bagley & Hallam 2016; Atkinson & Rowley 2019). Furthermore, attending the AP panel would provide more opportunities for preventative work and to signpost professionals to YP who may require further assessment.

Finally, the young person's rights have been discussed in both the research findings and literature (Gazeley 2010; Bryson 2010; Tilson & Oxley 2020). EPs possess the requisite skills to elicit the views of young people in a meaningful way and advocate for them when

appropriate. It would be imperative for EPs to continue to bring awareness of the rights of the young person during collaborative working with LAs, schools, families, and APs.

6.4 Quality Criteria

Several researchers are opposed to a 'set' qualitative criteria suggesting that universal criteria are problematic if not fruitless (Guba & Lincoln 2005). However, others argue that applying a flexible criteria ensures best practice, helps to improve research and opens the discussion for 'credibility' of qualitative research (Tracy, 2010). The eight "Big-Tent" proposed by Tracy (2010) was applied to this research. This model was chosen for its recognition, flexibility and emphasis on researchers design and methodology. The model emphasises the importance of the context in which the research took place. Therefore, this aligned with my methodological approach. Tracy (2010) proposes that eight considerations mark qualitative criteria, these have been outlined in the methodology chapter (3.11).

Worthy topic

Tracy (2010) implies that worthy topics are relevant, timely, significant, and interesting. The topic emerges from disciplinary priorities; subsequently, they are theoretical or conceptually compelling. As discussed in my introductory chapter, the poor outcomes for those at risk of school exclusion have been well documented (Pirrie et al., 2011). Fixed term exclusions continue to rise, increasing the use of AP (House of Commons Education Committee, 2018). Poor and good practices within AP have been highlighted in the literature review (Thomas and Pennacchia 2016), whilst the 'referral processes' are less well documented (Mills & Thompson 2018; Trotman et al., 2019). Furthermore, there is limited research on the role of the EP within this context. Some may consider this alarming given the significant number of pupils with SEN in these provisions. For these very reasons, this research has been timely, relevant, and significant.

Rich Rigour

In this model, 'rich rigour' proposes that description and explanation within the research are detailed and that there is an abundance of data sources to support significant claims. The findings chapter has provided rich quotes taken from interviews to support the claims made in the findings. Appendices 8 and 12 provide an account of the critical decisions in data analysis to support the rigourousness and transparency of the findings. I have also provided a

sample coded transcript and an example of an extract of a theme table (appendix 8) and LA documentation (Appendices 9-11) to support transparency further.

The model also suggests that the context and sample need to be appropriate given the research goals. Tracy (2010) suggests that researchers use appropriate procedures to both collect and analyse the data. The context where the research took place was appropriate given the research aims, and this has been explored in the methodological chapter, 'the learning milieu'. The methodological approach and method to both data collection and analysis provided a thorough, rigorous triangulation of findings through interviews with three different types of professionals and LA Documentation. The strengths, limitations and rationale of the methodological approach have also been provided in the methodology chapter.

Sincerity

Tracy, (2010) describes sincerity as an 'end goal' achieved through self-reflexivity, honesty, vulnerability, and transparency in data auditing. Where does the researcher stand in the research, what are their biases? Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasise the significance of researcher transparency due to the subjective nature of qualitative research. The researcher must be honest with the challenges faced during the research. A research diary (Appendix 14) was kept during the entirety of the research; both peer and professional supervision was used to reflect on thoughts and how these thoughts may influence decisions made within the research. A reflexive account and limitations of this study have been provided further in this chapter. The reflexive account acknowledges both the challenges faced in the research and my potential biases. Further transparency has been highlighted in the rationale and personal interests in researching this topic (introductory chapter).

Credibility

The model infers credibility is underpinned by thick descriptions, concrete detail, and tacit (non-textual) knowledge. It relies on triangulation or 'crystallisation' and refers to the trustworthiness of the research. The thick description relies on the context; Tracy (2010) suggests that any behaviour could mean several things when divorced from its context. It relies on the researcher to account for the complex specificity and circumstantiality of their data. I have provided an in-depth discussion surrounding the 'learning milieu' and the

'program initiative' within the methodology chapter. In line with IE, this research accounts for the context in which this research has occurred. The context has also been considered in the discussion along with the findings. As part of stage 2 in IE, I spent several months developing the 'tacit knowledge' by observing both the AP panel and the FAP and speaking to professionals. Furthermore, the methodological approach and method relied on a triangulation of findings.

Resonance

Tracy's (2010) model refers to resonance as the

"research's ability to meaningfully reverberate and affect an audience"

(p844).

One of the features of IE is to build a 'recognisable reality'. In stage 5, findings were shared with key professionals in the LA, feedback from the meeting (Appendix 13) suggested that findings resonated with professionals and allowed them to think about the next steps. The findings of this research resonated with some of the findings of previous research outlined in the literature review. According to Tracy (2010), this also increases the trustworthiness and resonance of the research. The model also discusses transferability and natural generalisation. In line with 'moderatum generalisability' some of the findings, implications and recommendations for practice may be transferable or at least provide a useful starting point for other LAs.

Significant Contribution

Tracy (2010) suggests qualitative research must consider the significant contribution when considering the quality. Therefore, she asks the following questions:

"does the study extend on the current knowledge", "improve practice", and "generate ongoing research"

(p845).

The gap in the literature and rationale for this study highlighted the limited information surrounding the referral process and the EP role in this context. The research aimed to explore this from the perspective of key professionals working in this context therefore extending on

the current perceptions. The findings and recommendations proposed by this study would benefit the current LA, schools, APs, EPs and most importantly, YP and their families. The recommendations and model presented in the discussion chapter could provide a useful starting point for other LAs and EP services. The findings demonstrated the importance the EP role has in changing the narrative and advocating for YP and their families. Barriers to accessing the current EP service could have broader implications for other EP services.

Ethical

The model suggests that ethics underpins the entire model and the research itself (Tracy 2010). Ethics for this research was granted by the university research committee (appendix 3). The relational and situational ethics were considered when using the term 'evaluation' within the research (Cooper, 2019) and how the research would negate the feelings of being judged. The power dynamics between interviewee and interviewer have also been shared as part of my personal reflection in this chapter. Tracy also urges researchers to consider the 'exiting ethics,' e.g., how the findings are shared with the participants and other professionals. As part of stage 5, the findings were shared with the LA. The findings were shared in a consultative way to enable professionals to problem solve without the feeling of judgment.

Meaningful Coherence

The final principle of this model refers to the term meaningful coherence of the research. Meaningful, coherent studies are research that has achieved the stated purpose. Research that has accomplished what it espoused to be about whilst using methods that represent the theoretical underpinnings. Research that achieves meaningful coherence also attentively connects the literature review with the findings of the research. Each chapter has intended to remind readers of the purpose of the research to develop a sense of coherence. The rationale for using the methodological approach in relation to the research aims and questions has also demonstrated the meaningful coherence of this research. Further coherence was achieved through stage 5 of IE, as it presented the reality of the AP Panel, which was recognisable to professionals within the LA. As previously discussed, the findings also paralleled much of the literature reviewed, further supporting meaningful coherence.

6.5 strengths, Limitations & future research

6.5.1 Strengths

It was identified in the literature that much of the research on APs focus on the good or poor practices with AP (McCluskey et al., 2015; Thomas & Pennacchia 2016; Putwain et al., 2016; Malcolm 2019), there is limited research that explores how YP reach AP (Trotman et al., 2019). There was also minimal research that explored the 'referral processes', e.g., how this process works, is the process adequate, and how can it be improved (Mills & Thomson, 2018). Furthermore, an inquiry led by the House of Commons Education Committee (2018) suggested significant variation in how Panels in the LA are run, managed, and how well they work. This study provides an insight into accessing AP through the AP Panel and illuminating other wider systemic issues in schools. There is also a value in completing research that is grounded in reality, especially given the level of complexity in each context.

Another strength of this study was the limited information around the role of the EP in this context. Whilst the findings were comparable to research linked to 'managed moves' (Bagley & Hallam, 2017), this research provides further insight into how EPs can facilitate the use of AP and support the systemic issues in school to prevent fixed term exclusions and use of AP.

Furthermore, IE was established as a methodological approach in educational psychology (Burden, 2008) to evaluate educational practices. The strength of IE is that it recognises the importance of the complex social, cultural, and political context that a 'program initiative' is enshrined in (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Jamieson et al., 1977). The research highlighted several conflicts arising in a multifaceted system. However, the 'client centred' nature of IE has supported a set of reality-based solutions that have been co-constructed with LA professionals. This accessible and structured methodology lends itself to evaluative research in educational psychology due to its social-constructivist, client-centred and consultive approaches (Burden, 2008).

Another strength of using this methodological approach is the triangulation of findings. Triangulation is described as a combination of methods and may increase the validity and credibility of findings (Guion et al., 2011). Subsequently, it can compensate for the limitations of a single methodological approach. This study utilised both LA documentation and interviews from multiple sources to provide a fuller picture of the 'program initiative'. Data was not collected for observations of the AP Panel. Nonetheless, initial observations

contributed to the development of the topic guide for the interviews. However, this limitation will be explored further in 6.5.2.

6.5.2 Limitations

The triangulation of data is a noted strength of IE; this is also one of the limitations of this research. Although there are no set or prescribed strategies of IE, there is an emphasis on observation, interviews, questionnaires and analysis of documentation. Due to the events of COVID-19 and school closures, AP Panels were not meeting. Subsequently, I was unable to collect data to inform the findings. I recognise that this data would have provided a richer picture of the rhetoric and practice of the AP Panel. However, due to the limited time and being a sole researcher, I could not collect observational data of the panel when they resumed. Despite being unable to collect observational data, there are several doctoral examples where observations have not been used within IE (Palmer 2017; Carter, 2018).

Another limitation of this study was that I was unable to recruit school professionals. This has likely been impacted by COVID-19 and the immense pressure on schools as key workers during the pandemic. Given the nature of some of the systemic issues raised in schools by other professionals, the school perspective would have added to the rich data presented in this study. The AP panel is there to support schools; their viewpoint on the effectiveness of panel would have been invaluable to the ongoing development.

A final limitation of this study is that due to its 'case study' approach, the findings and recommendations could be perceived as only applicable to the current setting. While I recognise several factors are related and unique to this LA, the findings imply that some recommendations can be transferrable and can support systemic change in other settings.

6.5.3 Future Research

Findings from the research and feedback with the LA highlighted several areas to be explored by future research. Parents and YP were not included in this study as this research was concerned with illuminating practices within the LA. For this reason, they were not identified as groups of interest within the research. However, findings and the feedback meeting with the LA highlighted the need for the involvement of families and YP within the referral process. The findings and feedback meeting highlighted that investment and involvement from YP, and their families was crucial to the effectiveness of the referral process. Subsequently, whilst I did not include the views of families or YP who experience the process, future research should

consider this. E.g., how do they experience the referral process, what do they perceive as the limitation and strengths of such processes, and how do they perceive these processes can be improved? Research touches on perceptions of the referral processes from families, however this is limited (Mills and Thompson 2018) and focussed on perceptions of a 'school swap' (Rowe 2019). If the young person is the 'true-client' of this process, their views will be essential to improving practice. Furthermore, future research should also include the views of professionals in school who make referrals. This would add value to the perspective surrounding the referral process in the LA.

The literature highlighted the limited research surrounding the referral process (Mills & Thompson 2018, Trotman et al., 2019). The feedback meeting with professionals indicated that exploring the longer-term effectiveness of the AP Panel would be beneficial. Future research should explore the long-term implications on the outcomes for YP. In addition, while this research was completed in one LA, future research evaluating the effectiveness and perceptions of referral processes across different LAs would be invaluable. For example, factors for best practice could be considered and practices improved nationally.

Exploring this topic more broadly and from discussions within the LA, it has become apparent that YP who access and use AP are more likely to be from ethnic minorities and be eligible for free school meals. This raises questions for social inclusion for these marginalised groups. Future research should explore the barriers to the social inclusion of these groups in this context. These views should include views and perspectives from professionals, families and YP.

6.7 Personal Reflections
This final section of the chapter will provide a personal reflection of my experiences in completing this research. The constructivist and interpretive views of the researcher are unavoidable characteristics of qualitative research (Braun & Clarke 2012) and IE (Burden 2008). Subsequently, the researchers must provide a reflexive account to give value and clarity to the study (Creswell & Creswell 2018).

I started this research topic with a deep interest in improving the processes to support YP at risk of school exclusions. My personal experience of being fixed term excluded from school was a feeling of exile and rejection. I eventually returned to school, yet these thoughts and

feelings remain with me today. These experiences have encouraged me to research the alternatives to school exclusion.

When I began this research, I was aware of my views and stance on using AP. As stated in the introduction chapter, I had worked in several mainstream secondary schools, where I witnessed the harmful use of AP. Given my potentially opposing viewpoints of AP and school exclusions (due to my personal experiences), I was keen to ensure that these did not impact the data collection or interpretation of the findings. A research diary was used to challenge my thoughts when collecting data and whilst interpreting the findings. Reflecting on data collection, I was extremely mindful to remain neutral. In my first interview, a participant asked me why this topic? Being aware of my views, I asked the participant if I could answer this question at the end of the interview, to which they agreed. Furthermore, being aware of my views, I asked participants to share both the success and challenges of accessing AP to ensure my viewpoints did not impact data collection.

I believe that this research has been a life-changing experience, some of my more negative views of using AP have been challenged. I have reflected on previous experiences and realised the complexity of some of the difficult decisions schools and LAs must make. Using a research diary helped me reflect on my decision making throughout the entire research project. Subsequently, I have started to use a diary for professional reflections to support my practice.

Separating my identity as a researcher and as a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) has also been challenging. I reflected on the impact of the power imbalances during data collection between interviewer and interviewee. Being aware of the power imbalance as a TEP, I took several steps to reduce this. I started all interviews with 'problem-free talk'. I did this for several reasons, firstly to relax participants as I was very aware of the current climate (COVID-19) and to build a relationship with unfamiliar professionals. During this time, I also made it explicitly clear that the researcher role was different to my TEP role. However, during one interview, a participant still referred to my role as the 'psychologist'. I also felt that EPs are still viewed as the 'experts' and contemplated how this impacted the interviews. Was I seen as the expert in using AP? Did this influence responses? In contrast to this, I also felt the power imbalance shift when I interviewed professionals in more senior roles. I believe this was related to my confidence in completing semi-structured interviews for research.

As a profession, EPs always strive to advocate for families and YP. The findings have resonated with what is essential to my practice, the voice of the young person. By completing this research, I have reaffirmed the importance of ensuring the views of YP are collected and delivered in a meaningful way. The voice of YP should be at the forefront of the decisions made if we are ever truly to establish the young person's rights in practice. From completing this research using IE, I believe YP are the 'true-clients' of the work completed in schools, APs and the LA.

The process of this research has taught me a great deal about 'real-world' research, the skills and careful considerations required to navigate research in a complex, multifaceted system. Within my development role as a researcher, I have learnt the challenges of managing differing perspectives and the ethical implications of this. Covid-19 has meant that the research required flexibility such as changing recruitment and interview strategies while thinking about my role as a researcher. Conducting interviews virtually brought different challenges to completing research in person. The reality of real-world research has also meant that I had to forgo collecting data from observations; this was both upsetting and challenging to accept. Meeting with professionals in the LA and APs made me reflect on how many stresses and strains professionals are managing to ensure that decisions made have positive outcomes.

This research has been both challenging and enlightening, it has illuminated the strengths and areas of development, but it has also illuminated issues for consideration in my practice as I enter the EP profession. I will hold the power which could change the narrative and the outcome of some of the most important decisions around a young person's educational experience. Finally, I believe that this experience has prepared me to continue research in educational psychology.

6.6 Chapter summary

It is hoped that this research has illuminated practice and provided a 'recognisable reality' of accessing AP as a preventative approach to school exclusion and the role of the EP in this context. Alongside this, it is hoped that the practical solutions to the issues raised will help improve practice in the future. The benefits of the LA referral process means that the LA can protect the welfare and interests of vulnerable families and YP. Collaborative work is essential within the referral processes, with all professionals responsible for upholding the rights of YP.

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8. Appendices

Appendix 1: Different types of alternative Provision (AP)

Mills and Thompson (2018) outlined the definition of different types of AP:

1. Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) – "*an establishment run by a Local authority which is specifically organised to provide education for children who would not otherwise receive it. This can be for example because they have been excluded or have a mental health or physical health condition that means they cannot attend their normal school*" (p7). This is very similar to the definition of AP shared in the main body of the thesis (2.3).

2. AP Academy – PRUs which convert to academy status are deemed AP academies, they can convert on their own, as part of a chain of academies or with the support of a sponsor.

3. AP Free school – "*As of 1 July 2018 there are 41 AP free schools that have been opened through the free schools programme, with more planned. AP free schools can be established with support from a local authority or from a proposer group. When deciding whether to approve new AP free schools, the DfE takes into account applications that will fit within local authorities' strategies for children and young people requiring alternative provision*" (p6).

4. Independent AP - This is an AP which is not a PRU, AP Free school, AP academy or a designated hospital school. It includes a range of different types of providers such as private companies, charities, community, and voluntary sector. Independent APs maybe commissioned by LA, and they may or may not subject to inspection by Ofsted or registered with the DfE. "*The statutory guidance on this states an AP provider should be registered as an independent school if it meets registration criteria (i.e. that it provides full-time education to five or more full-time pupils of compulsory school age, or one such pupil who is looked-after or has a statement of SEN)*" (p7). Both APs who participated within this research were independent APs at the time the research took place and are commissioned by the LA when and if required.

Appendix 2: Literature Search
An initial literature search was conducted in August 2019 to explore what was already known and understood about the topic of AP and to start to identify gaps in the literature. I used Bristol library searches and a search on google scholar to achieve this. Furthermore, a preliminary search was completed to identify relevant search terms for the systematic literature review. The online database British Education Index was searched using the terms 'Alternative Provision', the keywords listed within relevant journals were noted and synonyms considered.

The systematic literature search began in November 2020 using the following databases: British Education Index, and, Child Development and Adolescent Studies, Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC) and EThOS (Electronic Theses Online Service). In addition to these databases individual journals British Educational Research Journal (BERA), and Educational Psychology in Practice were also searched. A final search was completed in June 2021 to ensure the most up to date research was included. Tables 5 presents the search terms used in the multiple field searches within these databases.

Table 5: Search Terms

Categories	Search Terms
1	Alternative Provision **OR** Alternative Education **OR** Alternative Educational Provision **OR** Alternative Learning Provision
2	Perception, **OR** Experiences **OR** Attitudes **OR** Opinions **OR** views **OR** Perspectives **OR** Decision Making.
3	School Exclusion **OR** School Fixed Term Exclusion **OR** Preventing School Exclusion **OR** Risk of Exclusion
4	Fair Access Panel **OR** Alternative Provision Panel **OR** referral process* OR Local Authority Panel OR Multi Agency Working
5	Educational Psychology **OR** Educational Psychologist **OR** Educational Psychology Services **OR** Role of Educational psychology*

Search strategy

A detailed overview of the search strategy can be seen in the table below. Relevant articles where selected based on reading the title, the abstract and the relevance to research questions. This was later refined further using the inclusion, exclusion criteria and relevance to the research questions (table 7 & figure 7). The search aimed to include literature which focused on the use of AP, referral processes and the role of the EP from the perspectives of key professionals. Therefore, the directive 'and' was used in the various searchers.

Table 6: Literature Review Search Strategy.

Database	Search terms	Refinement/ Comments	Results	Relevant number
1) British Education index, 2) Child Development and Adolescent Studies, 3) Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC).	Alternative Provision **OR** Alternative Education **OR** Alternative Educational Provision **OR** Alternative Learning Provision	Additional limits applied: Based in UK, and from 2010 onwards.	395	14
	Combination of categories 1 & 2 with 'and'		215	8
	Combination of categories 1 & 3 with 'and'		4	4
	Combination of categories 1, 2 & 3 with 'and'		9	6
	Combination of categories 3, 4 with 'and'		3	1
	Educational Psychology **OR** Educational Psychologist **OR** Educational Psychology Services **OR** Role of Educational psychology*		247	4

	Combination of categories 1, 2 & 5 with 'and'		1	1
	Combination of categories 2 & 5 with 'and'		21	9
EThOS	'Alternative Provision' AND 'school exclusion'	categories 1 & 4 were used separately in an initial search in Ethos, no literature was obtained, therefore the search strategies was changed. Additional limits applied: Based in UK, and from 2010 onwards.	29	9
	'Fair Access Panel'*		5	1

In addition to the search strategy government guidance documents regarding AP were also searched through the department of education (DfE) website. A snowballing approach was also utilised in addition to ensure all relevant papers had been identified in the literature search (Wohlin, 2014). Snowballing is an approach whereby related records and references lists are hand searched to identify potentially relevant literature.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria & Rationale

In line with the principles of a systematic literature search (Byrman, 2016), inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied (Table 4). Many studies exist within the international literature regarding the use of AP supporting those at risk of permanent school exclusion. However, I am aware that legislation and education systems vary and are likely to be different across countries. Alongside this, APs, the 'referral process', and the EP's role may not be comparable to the UK context. Therefore, only the UK studies have been included. Only research from 2010 onwards was included as the introduction of the Academies Act (2010) changed the legislative context of schooling in the UK (Smith & Abbott, 2014).

The research aims of the current study are to explore the viewpoints of key stakeholders. Therefore, the literature review sought to seek the viewpoints of these professionals. YP's views were included in the sample as it was felt their perspectives would provide a helpful

insight into what factors they perceived supported them at AP and prevented further exclusions. In addition, much of the literature exploring stakeholders' views included the views of YP. Parental views only were excluded as the research wanted to explore the professionals' perceptions. The perspective of only primary school professionals was excluded as this research explicitly wanted to explore the perspective of stakeholders working with secondary aged pupils. PRUs in the LA are predominantly used for YP who have been permanently included. Therefore, research in only Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) was excluded from the search, as it was not the population of interest in the current research.

Research from mainstream secondary schools and APs were included as these settings were of interest to the research. Both qualitative and mixed design research methods were included, while quantitative approaches only were excluded as viewpoints and perspectives aligned with these approaches. In addition to the peer-reviewed published articles, the literature review also included grey literature. The limitations of published literature have been noted (Rosenthal, 1979), particularly concerning publication bias (Petticrew et al., 2008). Within qualitative research, there is a justification for including grey literature, e.g., unpublished articles, government reports (Major and Savin-Baden, 2010).

Table 7: Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria for Literature Search.

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
UK studies	Research outside of the UK
2010 onwards	2009 backwards
- Views of key stakeholders (e.g., professionals in schools, APs, LAs & parents)	- Parental views only
	- Views of primary school aged children only.
- Views of YP (secondary age 11-16)	- research focusing on permanently excluded YP.
- studies discussing Alternative Provisions	- Research in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) only
	- Quantitative only
- studies on mainstream secondary schools	- Books
	- Book reviews
- Qualitative design	- not written in English
- Mixed design	

- Peer reviewed journals

- Grey literature

Total Number of relevant results from databases

56

Papers removed

20

Checking for duplicates

36

Papers excluded

16

Literature removed based on inclusion and exclusion criteria

20

Additional grey literature identified through DfE website

9

Final total of literature reviewed

37

Additional papers added via snowballing

8
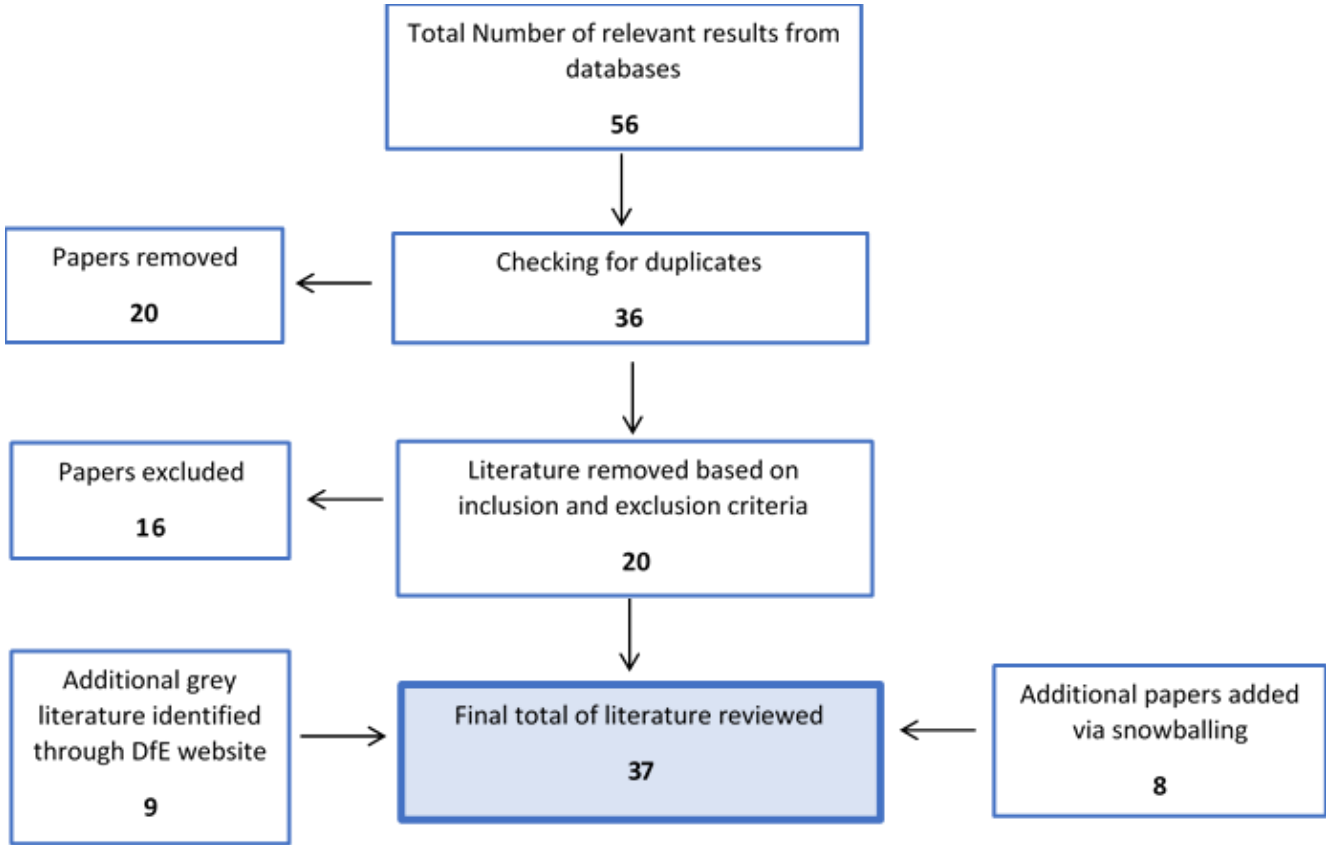
Figure 7: Visual Representation of the Search Strategy

In line with principles of systematic literature search (Bryman 2016), the quality of the remaining literature was assessed using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme, (CASP, 2013).

Appendix 3: Ethics Application

University of BRISTOL

School for Policy Studies

SPS RESEARCH ETHICS
APPLICATION FORM: STAFF and DOCTORAL STUDENTS

- This proforma must be completed for each piece of research carried out by members of the School for Policy Studies, both staff and doctoral postgraduate students.
- See the Ethics Procedures document for clarification of the process.
- All research **must** be ethically reviewed before any fieldwork is conducted, regardless of source of funding.
- See the School's policy and guidelines relating to research ethics and data protection, to which the project is required to conform.
- Please stick to the word limit provided. **Do not attach** your funding application or research proposal.

Key project details:

1.	**Proposer's Name**	Jas Kandola

2.	**Proposer's Email Address:**	*Sn18413@bristol.ac.uk*

3.	**Project Title**	An Illuminative Evaluation exploring access to and use of Alternative Provision as a preventative approach to secondary school exclusion.

4.	**Project Start Date:**	January 2020	**End Date:**	July 2021

This ethics form was submitted in unprecedented times of COVID-19. Therefore, whilst the country remains in 'lockdown' this research will be conducted via Microsoft Teams. Observations of the AP Panel will take place via Microsoft Teams should they still go ahead, interviews will also be held over Microsoft Teams. Should this change in the upcoming weeks e.g. the government reduce restriction, ethics will be updated accordingly.

Who needs to provide Research Ethics Committee approval for your project?

The SPS REC will only consider those research ethics applications which do not require submission elsewhere. As such, you should make sure that your proposed research does not require a NHS National Research Ethics Service (NRES) review e.g. does it involve NHS patients, staff or facilities – see http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/ethics/

If you are not sure where you should apply, please discuss it with either the chair of the Committee or the Faculty Ethics Officer who is based in RED.

Social care research projects which involve NHS patients, people who use services or people who lack capacity as research participants need to be reviewed by a Social Care Research Ethics Committee (see https://www.hra.nhs.uk/planning-and-improving-research/policies-standards-legislation/social-care-research/). Similarly research which accesses unanonymised patient records (without informed consent) must be reviewed by a REC and the National Information Governance Board for Health and Social Care (NIGB).

Who needs to provide governance approval for this project?

If this project involves access to patients, clients, staff or carers of an NHS Trust or Social Care Organisation, it falls within the scope of the Research Governance Framework for Health and Social. You will also need to get written approval from the Research Management Office or equivalent of each NHS Trust or Social Care Organisation.

When you have ethical approval, you will need to complete the research registration form:

http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/research-governance/registration-sponsorship/study-notification.html

Guidance on completing this form can be found at: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/research-governance/registration-sponsorship/guidance.pdf. Contact the Research Governance team (research-governance@bristol.ac.uk) for guidance on completing this form and if you have any questions about obtaining local approval.

Do you need additional insurance to carry out your research?

Whilst staff and doctoral students will normally be covered by the University's indemnity insurance there are some situations where it will need to be checked with the insurer. If you are conducting research with: Pregnant research subjects or children under 5 you should email: insurance-enquiries@bristol.ac.uk

In addition, if you are working or travelling overseas you should take advantage of the university travel insurance (see http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/insurance/travel-insurance/).

Do you need a Disclosure and Barring Service check?

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) replaces the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). Criteria for deciding whether you require a DBS check are available from:

https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/about

You should specifically look at the frequency, nature, and duration of your contact with potentially vulnerable adults and or children. If your contact is a one-off research interaction, or infrequent contact (for example: 3 contacts over a period of time) you are unlikely to require a check.

If you think you need a DBS check then you should consult the University of Bristol web-page:

http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/legal/dbs/

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5. If your research project requires REC approval elsewhere please tell us which committee, this includes where co-researchers are applying for approval at another institution. Please provide us with a copy of your approval letter for our records when it is available.

N/A

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6. Have all subcontractors you are using for this project (including transcribers, interpreters, and co-researchers not formally employed at Bristol University) agreed to be bound by the School's requirements for ethical research practice?

Yes		
No/Not yet		Note: You must ensure that written agreement is secured before they start to work. They will be provided with training and sign a detailed consent form.
Not applicable	**x**	

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7. If you are a PhD/doctoral student please tell us the name of your research supervisor(s).

John Franey – First Supervisor

Rob Green – First Supervisor

Beth Tarleton – Second Supervisor

Please confirm that your supervisor(s) has seen this final version of your ethics application?

Yes | **x**

No |

8. Who is funding this study?

University of Bristol/ Department of Education

If this study is funded by the ESRC or another funder requiring lay representation on the ethics committee and is being undertaken by a member staff, this form should be submitted to the Faculty REC.

Post-graduate students undertaking ESRC funded projects should submit their form to the SPS Research Ethics Committee (SPS REC).

9. Is this application part of a larger proposal?

No | **x**

Yes |

If yes, please provide a summary of the larger study and indicate how this application relates to the overall study.

10. Is this proposal a replication of a similar proposal already approved by the SPS REC? Please provide the SPS REC reference number.

No | **x**

Yes |

If Yes, please tell us the name of the project, the date approval was given and code (if you have one).
Please describe any differences (such as context) in the current study. If the study is a replication of a previously approved study. Submit these first two pages of the form.

ETHICAL RESEARCH PROFORMA

The following set of questions is intended to provide the School Research Ethics Committee with enough information to determine the risks and benefits associated with your research. You should use these questions to assist in identifying the ethical considerations which are important to your research. You should identify any relevant ethical issues and how you intend to deal with them. Whilst the REC does not comment on the methodological design of your study, it will consider whether the design of your study is likely to produce the benefits you anticipate. **Please avoid copying and pasting large parts of research bids or proposals which do not directly answer the questions.** Please also avoid using *unexplained* acronyms, abbreviations or jargon.

1. **IDENTITY & EXPERIENCE OF (CO) RESEARCHERS:** Please give a list of names, positions, qualifications, previous research experience, and functions in the proposed research of all those who will be in contact with participants

Jas Kandola – Trainee Educational Psychologist (university of Bristol). MSc & BSc in Psychology. Previous research experience includes research dissertations in both the MSc & BSc and Year 1 Research Commission for Educational Psychology doctorate. The planning and preparation for all three research projects were conducted by the researcher. Within these research projects data was collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Analysis was completed using software systems (e.g., SPSS) and thematic analysis. Interpretation of findings in the Year 1 research commission were presented to the commissioners & other professionals (e.g., tutors, other trainees, Educational Psychologist from other Local Authorities).

2. **STUDY AIMS/OBJECTIVES [maximum of 200 words]:** Please provide the aims and objectives of your research.

The aim of this study is to use Illuminative evaluation to find out how the decision is made about children and young people accessing alternative provisions (AP) as a preventative approach to school permanent exclusion and how this can help. I will do this by using observations of the AP Panel for AP (Local authorities panel that assesses children suitability for accessing funded APs) and interviews of key stakeholders to gain a better understanding of how the processes work. From this I hope to help the Local Authority

with their future decision making and policy development regarding the use of APs as a preventative approach to permeant school exclusion.

The research aims are:

- To provide the local authority with information on what is already working well and the strengths or the current processes in place

- To explore potentially or any discrepancies occurring between the different viewpoints around the current processes.

- To highlight any concerns from various stake holders regarding the current processes

- To consider strategies to overcome the concerns raised.

Specific areas to be considered will be:

- How do key stakeholders view the current LA processes to access funded APs?

- How do APs help children and young people and prevent permanent exclusion?

- How are children and young people included in the decision making?

- What is working well with current process?

- How can current processes be improved?

- How do they see the role the EP in supporting these children and young people?

RESEARCH WITH HUMAN PARTICIPANTS
(If you are undertaking secondary data analysis, please proceed to section 11)

3.	**RESEARCH METHODS AND SAMPLING STRATEGY [maximum of 300 words]:** Please tell us what you propose to do in your research and how individual participants, or groups of participants, will be identified and sampled. Please also tell us what is expected of research participants who consent to take part (Please note that recruitment procedures are covered in question 8)

Seabreeze – has been anonymised, it is the service in the Local Authority (LA) where the research will be carried out.

Using the structure of Illuminative Evaluation (Parlett and Hamilton's 1992), the first stage of the project is 'setting up the evaluation.' During this stage I will meet with the head of Seabreeze via Microsoft Teams to agree what information we both hope to gain from the study and how this will help to inform policy and practice in the Local Authority. I will also explain to her how the study will be carried out. The outcome of this study will be discussed as part of this negotiation; a report which will be sensitive, honest and a useful reflection of the current processes surrounding the use of APs. During preliminarily discussion, the head of Seabreeze has confirmed, if agreed by the Ethics Committee, she is happy for the study to take place.

The second stage of the study is open-ended exploration (Parlett and Hamilton, 1992) and for this I will adopt an ethnographical approach by observing AP Panel. I will then analyse my observations. Consent will need to be obtained from all professionals at AP Panel. Observations will happen via Microsoft Teams until 'normal' business resumes. The AP Panel is attended by the professionals who work in the LA; I won't be naming the roles of the professionals. This is because the number of AP panel is small (9-10 people), therefore, there is a risk of them being identified. It is Important to note that schools/parent/young people do not attend. All panel members either work for Seabreeze or Children's Service within the LA.

The third stage of the study is a focused inquiry stage. Using the findings from stage two to focus my questioning, I will use semi-structured interviews. I will be interviewing professionals from the LA who attend panel, school professionals who submit cases to panel for consideration, professionals who work in the LA, funded APs and Educational Psychologists. This will hopefully give me a total of 12 interviews and will allow me to explore the different perspectives of key stakeholders in this process and supporting children and young people in APs. Thematic analysis will be used to analyse the data from the interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Interviews will happen via Microsoft Teams until fieldwork resumes.

For the first stage of the research consent and information will be sent to all attendees of AP Panel via the gatekeeper (Chair of AP Panel) for observation and interviews. This includes schools, EPs, other professionals from panel and APs. The criteria for selecting panel members (professionals from LA) will be based on principles of opportunity sampling. Therefore, all members will be provided with an information and consent sheet. From those who consent, 3-4 participants will be selected based on their role in the local authority and at panel. This is to ensure that I have a wider viewpoint from the key stakeholders.

As APs and schools do not attend panel they will be contacted via the same gatekeeper, she will send the PIS, consent forms and confidentiality protocol. As far as I am aware there are currently only three funded APs within the Local Authority. They will all be sent an information and consent sheet via the same gatekeeper.

Parlett, M. & Hamilton, D. (1972). Evaluation as illumination: a new approach to the study of innovatory programs. Occasional Paper, London: Nuffield Foundation.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using Thematic Analysis in psychology. Qualitative research in psychology, Vol 3, No 2, pp. 77-101.

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4.   EXPECTED DURATION OF RESEARCH ACTIVITY: Please tell us how long each researcher will be working on fieldwork/research activity. For example, conducting interviews between March to July 2019. Also tell us how long participant involvement will be. For example: Interviewing 25 professional participants for a maximum of 1 hour per interview.

Observation and interviews will take place between May 2020 and December 2020. Observations of the AP Panel will be the duration of these meetings. They are anticipated to be between 1-1.5hours. I will observe panel four times. Interviews will last between 45mins-1hour. All observations and interviews will take place over Microsoft Teams until fieldwork resumes (post covid-19).

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5.   POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND TO WHOM: [maximum 100 words] Tell us briefly what the main benefits of the research are and to whom.

The information and knowledge gained through the study will hopefully benefit the service I am working within. It will increase the knowledge of the processes within the LA for accessing APs and potentially highlight barriers for schools to access the Seabreeze with ideas to overcome this. This is pertinent as it has been raised that schools are not accessing Seabreeze for these children and young people. Furthermore, the APs are concerned around the number of children and young people with unidentified SEN needs who are in these provisions. Therefore, this is an area of focus and development for Seabreeze.

More Specifically:

- **Benefits to school:** An opportunity to share their views regarding the use of APs as preventative approach to school permanent exclusion. Also, an opportunity for them to help the Local Authority develop and improve current processes.

- **Benefits to LA:** The LA can use the research to help them inform and further develop the current policies and processes that are in place for the use APs as preventative placement for children at risk of permanent school exclusion. They will have a greater understanding from different viewpoints in and out of the local authority what is working and what could be improved in this process. They will also have some understanding of the barriers that might prevent other professionals from accessing the service with some suggestions of how to overcome this.

- **Benefits to APs:** The APs will have a greater understanding from different viewpoints how others see the use of APs in a preventative approach to permeant school exclusion. The APs will also have the opportunity to give their views on the current policies and processes in place and how they could be improved to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people.

- **Benefits to children and young people:** The research will highlight how practice and policy can be further developed and improved in the Local Authority to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people.

- **Benefits to Educational psychology in practice:** An opportunity for EPs to share their views around the use of APs as a preventative approach to school permanent exclusion and the current processes to access these. An opportunity for EPs to reflect on some of the challenges that have been raised by schools and APs around Seabreeze supporting these children and young people. This will help EPs in this LA to continue to improve their practice to ensure the best outcome for children and young people.

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6. POTENTIAL RISKS/HARM TO PARTICIPANTS [maximum of 100 words]: What potential risks are there to the participants and how will you address them? List any potential physical or psychological dangers that can be anticipated? You may find it useful to conduct a more formal risk assessment prior to conducting your fieldwork. The University has an example risk assessment form and guidance : http://www.bristol.ac.uk/safety/media/gn/RA-gn.pdf and http://www.bristol.ac.uk/safety/policies/

RISK	HOW IT WILL BE ADDRESSED
Participants may feel uncomfortable about their opinions being included in the report if they are reporting negative experiences; they may be concerned it will affect them professional, damage a relationship, or hurts another's feeling/professional role.	Participants will be reminded throughout the research that all data will be anonymous: no names will be recorded during the observations; no names will be needed for the interviews. Names will also not be included in the report.
	Participants will also be reminded that the aim of the report is to illuminate the processes and practices around the use of APs. Therefore, the report will not judge and will not be reported in a negative or 'finger pointing' way. Participant's identity will be kept anonymous in the report to ensure that no negativity will be attached to any individual.
	Participants will be reminded through-out the research about their rights to withdraw at any point, every effort will be made to respect this

	request but if the data has already been anonymised and analysed this may not be possible.
Participants may be especially concerned as the selected method mean they are more identifiable	Participants will be reminded throughout the research that all data will be anonymous: no names will be recorded during the observations; no names will be needed for the interviews. Names will also not be included in the report. Any names that are mentioned during interviews will be removed from transcripts. The identity of panel members will be protected as I will not share the name or the job role of the professionals who agreed to be observed.
	Participants will also be reminded at the start of the interviews that their stories or experiences they choose to share might make them identifiable. They will also be reminded that they will receive a copy of their transcripts (both for interviews and observations) to check for accuracy, remove specific comments they no-longer want to be included and to check they are happy for their data to be included. They will have the opportunity at this point to remove data which they feel might identify who they are. Transcripts will be sent via an encrypted email for participants to check. This will protect potential sensitive information being read by anyone else.
	Participants will also be provided with a PIS and confidentiality protocol which outlines the potential limits of confidentiality. Therefore, they will be aware of this before the interview/observations. Participants will be asked to read the confidentiality protocol and agree to this.
Participants may feel their practices are being judged or scrutinized negatively.	As mentioned previously I will ensure that all participants understand the aim of the project: to illuminate what is happening, not judge. I will make it clear in the information sheets, at the start of the observations, interviews and the final report that my role is to include all the different viewpoints and reflect an honest and fair picture based on what is said. All data will be anonymised, to limit as much as possible, the identity of the professionals.
	I will reiterate to participants through-out the research the benefits and importance of their views being shared to make them feel comfortable to share their views without the fear of being criticised.
	I will use triangulation of information, personal reflections and scrutiny of my data analysis to ensure that the themes I find are based on what has actually been said. This will help to ensure that the themes found are genuinely significant and not based on my own biases and perspective of the situation. I will also discuss the findings of my data analysis with the head of Seabreeze as a method to check that they are recognisable.
	Participants will be reminded through-out the research about their rights to withdraw at any point, every effort will be made to respect this request but if the data has already been anonymised and analysed this may not be possible.
Participants may feel that they may be recognised by other professionals involved in the panel/schools/alternative learning provisions if they take part in the interviews	Participants will be reminded throughout the research that all data will be anonymous: no names will be recorded during the observations; no names will be needed for the interviews. Names will also not be included in the report. Any names that are mentioned during interviews will be removed from transcripts.
	Participants will also be reminded at the start of the interviews that their stories or experiences they choose to share might make them

	identifiable. They will also be reminded that they will receive a copy of their transcripts (for both observations/interviews) to check for accuracy and to check they are happy for this to still be included. They will have the opportunity at this point to remove data which they feel might identify who they are or remove any specific comments they don't want to be included.
	Participants will also be provided with a PIS and confidentiality protocol which outlines the potential limits of confidentiality and therefore will be aware of this before the interview. Participants will be asked to read and agree to the confidentiality protocol.
The research might highlight and raise systemic issues regarding the practices of APs/Schools/LA. This might reflect badly on professionals in these institutions.	All data and subsequently findings will be handled sensitively. Any issues that arise will be reflected on and discussed with my thesis supervisors and placement supervisor prior to reporting back to appropriate professionals within the LA e.g., head of Seabreeze, chair of panel, EPs, panel members.
	I will ensure that all participants understand the aim of the project: to illuminate what is happening, not judge. I will make it clear in the information sheets, at the start of the observations, interviews and the final report that my role is to include all the different viewpoints and reflect an honest and fair picture based on what is said. All data will be anonymised, to limit as much as possible, the identity of the professionals. panel, AP Panel members, principle EP and other EPs.
	I will also reiterate to participants through-out the research, the benefits and importance of their views being shared. This will help them to feel comfortable to share their views without the fear of being criticised. I will also point out that the aim of the study is to look at what is working well and to work together to find solutions around areas of developments. It is not to accuse any professional of bad practice.
Time demands on keyworkers during Covid-19.	All participants will be made aware of the time implications in the information sheets. I will be flexible to the needs of participants and allow them to pick a preferred time for the interviews. This will ensure they can carry-out their keyworker duties. Interviews will last no longer than an hour.
	I will also remind participants that it is there decision as to whether they wish to take part. If they feel that during COVID-19 this isn't possible then there will be no repercussions of their decision.
Participants may disclose information that indicates malpractice or the risk of significant harm to others.	If this occurs during observation, then this would be reported to the designated safeguarding officer within the LA and head of Seabreeze immediately. If this occurs during interviews with panel members, again I would inform the appropriate safeguarding professional in the LA immediately. Any information in interviews (e.g. with schools/APs) that indicates harm/malpractice will be shared with the school/APs designated safeguarding lead immediately.
	All safeguarding concerns will also be shared with both my supervisors, so they are aware and can ensure that I have taken all the necessary steps. I will also inform my placement supervisor as she is the safeguarding lead for the Educational Psychology team.
Participants who don't consent to observation might feel uncomfortable and therefore might not want to attend panel.	Before all observations I will reiterate that I will only be observing participants who have given me consent. I will also reiterate the purpose of observation is not to judge anyone but illuminate what is happening in practice.

	This risk has been discussed in preliminary discussions with head of Seabreeze. Once ethics has been approved this will be discussed further so she is able to support and help manage any worries panel members who have not consented might feel. My email address has also been provided on all participant documents and I will be happy to discuss worries or concerns with non-consenting members of AP PANEL.
Participants may feel obliged to take part in the study for various reasons: for example, as I work within the local authority some professionals may feel they are obliged to take part in the interviews as part of their jobs or professional expectation of them. Due to the hierarchy involvement e.g., head of Seabreeze they may also feel pressured.	This will be counteracted by fully informing participants of the aims of the study, its potential benefits, and the rights to withdraw at any time. I will also indicate to participants that if they choose not to participate there will be no repercussion of this. The decisions to participate or not will not impact their jobs. I will also make it clear that there is no professional expectation for any professional within or outside of the LA to participate in this study, and whilst I would very much like to hear their views, I respect their decision. I will also be flexible to the needs of the participants e.g., travel to schools, or council house to carry-out interview, or meet before or after school if more convenient etc.

*Add more boxes if needed.

7. RESEARCHER SAFETY [maximum of 200 words]: What risks could the researchers be exposed to during this research project? If you are conducting research in individual's homes or potentially dangerous places, then a researcher safety protocol is mandatory. Examples of safety protocols are available in the guidance.

RISK	HOW IT WILL BE ADDRESSED
Travelling to interview/AP PANEL locations when fieldwork resumes.	I will have full car insurance and will consider road condition and weather before travelling. I will also take the necessary safety precautions when travelling.

I will also follow university guidance on fieldwork relating to COVID-19. I will only carry-out face to face interviews or observation when safe to do so and permitted by the university. |
Difficult conversations with participations (emotional risk)	I will have a research diary through-out the research, this will be used for honest personal reflections following observation/ interviews. I will also be using my thesis supervisor/ placement supervisor to debrief after each interview.
Complaints from professional in LA/schools/APs/EPs following the report of findings.	Continuous reporting back, discussion and checking of the findings will happen through-out the data analysis and write up of the report. Additional support will be accessed from my thesis/placement supervisor if necessary, following the circulation of the report.
Personal connections between myself and the participants.	At the start of interviews/observations, I will make it clear that this research is part of the doctoral thesis, and whilst this is situated in the LA, this research is being completed independently to the LA and my job role. I will also be using my university email to arrange interviews, hold Microsoft Teams interviews, send transcripts and communicate with participants.

	I will only interview school professionals I have not worked with during my time on placement. I will also not observe cases where the schools I work in have submitted to the panel.
	EPs who I interview, I will have not worked directly with in my schools and will be from different area teams. This will limit the personal connection I have with these professionals. I have not worked directly with any of the professionals who attend panel and therefore have no personal connection with them.
	I will also keep a research diary, this will be used to record my personal reflections post observations and interviews. To scrutinise my data analysis, personal reflections will be viewed by thesis supervisors alongside my analysis. This will ensure that the themes I find are based on what has been said. This will help to ensure that the themes found are genuinely significant and not based on my own biases and perspectives of the situation.

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8. RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES [maximum of 400 words]: How are you going to access participants? Are there any gatekeepers involved? Is there any sense in which respondents might be "obliged" to participate (for example because their manager will know, or because they are a service user and their service will know), if so, how will this be dealt with.

Member of the Panel (Observations): The Chair of the AP Panel is a gatekeeper to all the panel attendees. She will introduce me to panel members at one of the AP Panel meetings via Microsoft Teams if panel is still going a head during COVID-19. I will then have the opportunity to briefly introduce myself and explain the purpose of the research. All participants of panel will be provided with a consent form and information sheet for me to observe. I will not observe on this occasion. The dates for me to observe panel are yet to be confirmed. If a member of the panel does not sign the consent form, they will not be observed during panel. Therefore, I will not record anything they say or do whilst carrying out my observation. I will check with the chair that there are no guest visitors attending panel a week before. If there are any guest members, they will be provided with a consent and information sheet at the earliest opportunity.

Member of Panel (interviews): I will also send all panel members the PIS and consent forms for interviews via the gatekeeper. Once I have received consent, I will contact participants by either phone call or email to arrange interviews and ensure that they understand the aims and purpose of the research. As I want a wide range of views, the criteria for interviews will include job role and role on the panel.

APs: Head of Seabreeze in preliminary discussion has agreed for me to contact the funded APs to gain consent to participate in the research. I will ask her to forward the PIS, consent and confidentiality protocol to the APs on my behalf. Once this consent is obtained, I will call them to a suitable interview date.

EPs: As I work in the service I will speak to the EP team at the professional group meeting and briefly outline my research. The selection criteria for EPs is anyone who has been involved in the process of the AP Panel, have had a case they have been working on which has gone to panel or been strategically involved in policy development around alternative provisions. I will not interview any EP I have directly worked with in any of my school or with specific cases. I will then send the PIS, consent, & confidential protocol via email to the EPs in the service. Once I have gained consent, I will arrange suitable interview dates and times.

School Professionals: The chair of AP Panel will be the gatekeeper, she will contact the school who submit to the panel I will ask her to forward the PIS, consent and confidential protocol to the Schools on my behalf. Once consent is received, I will contact schools via phone to arrange suitable interview times/dates.

Participants will be asked to forward consent forms to my university email provided on the consent forms. Once consent is obtained, I will contact participants via phone/email (depending on their preference) to arrange interviews.

As said before due to COVID-19 all interviews and observations will take place over Microsoft Teams until fieldwork is resumed by the university.

9. **INFORMED CONSENT [maximum of 200 words]:** How will this be obtained? Whilst many cases written consent is preferable, where this is not possible or appropriate this should be clearly justified. An age and ability appropriate participant information sheet (PIS) setting out factors relevant to the interests of participants in the study must be handed to them in advance of seeking consent (see materials table for list of what should be included). If you are proposing to adopt an approach in which informed consent is not sought, you must explain in detail why this is not considered to be appropriate. If you are planning to use photographic or video images in your method, then additional specific consent should be sought from participants.

All participants will be provided with a participant information sheet, consent forms and confidentiality protocol for both interviews and observations (where appropriate for observation). When consent is provided, I will arrange the interview dates I will talk through with them the aims of the study and what will be required of them and their rights to withdraw from the research. This will also include the benefits of the study, e.g., having an opportunity to share their opinions and helping to improve practice to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people. My contact details/ details of my first supervisor will be available should any participant want to discuss anything further.

At the start of the observation and interviews, the aims of the study and the participants' rights with regard to consent and participation will be explained e.g., that the information is anonymous, that they can withdraw at any time, every effort will be made to respect this request but if the data has already been anonymised and analysed this may not be possible. At the end of the observations and interviews, I will check with all participants that they are still happy to be included in the study. Participants will also receive a copy of their transcripts (from both interviews and observation) for them to check for accuracy and check that they are still happy for their data to be included. This will also provide an opportunity for participants to remove comments they don't want to include.

Please tick the box to confirm that you will keep evidence of the consent forms (either actual forms or digitally scanned forms), securely for twenty years.	x

10. If you intend to use an on-line survey (for example Survey Monkey) you need to ensure that the data will not leave the European Economic Area i.e., be transferred or held on computers in the USA. Online Surveys (formally called Bristol Online Surveys) is fully compliant with UK Data Protection requirements – see https://www.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/

Please tick the box to confirm that you will not use any on-line survey service based in the USA, China or outside the European Economic Area (EEA).	x

11. **DATA PROTECTION**: All applicants should regularly take the data protection on-line tutorial provided by the University in order to ensure they are aware of the requirements of current data protection legislation.

University policy is that "personal data can be sent abroad if the data subject gives unambiguous written consent. Staff should seek permission from the University Secretary prior to sending personal data outside of the EEA".

Any breach of the University data protection responsibilities could lead to disciplinary action.

Have you taken the mandatory University data protection on-line tutorial in the last 12 months? https://www.bris.ac.uk/is/media/training/uobonly/datasecurity/page_01.htm

Yes	x
No	

Do you plan to send any information/data, which could be used to identify a living person, to anybody who works in a country that is not part of the European Union?
See https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-and-brexit/data-protection-if-there-s-no-brexit-deal/the-gdpr/international-data-transfers/)

No	x	
Yes		If **YES,** please list the country or countries:

Please outline your procedure for data protection. It is University of Bristol policy that interviews must be recorded on an encrypted device. Ideally this should be a university owned encrypted digital recorder (see http://www.bristol.ac.uk/infosec/uobdata/transcription/).

If you lose research data which include personal information or a data breach occurs, you MUST notify the University immediately. This means sending an e-mail to data-protection@bristol.ac.uk and telling your Head of School. See additional details at http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/data-protection/data-breaches-and-incidents/

The UK Data Protection Act (2018) include potential fines of up to €20,000,000 for not protecting personal data – so please provide details about how you plan to ensure the protection of ALL research data which could be used to identify a living person.

I will comply with the data regulations both of the University of Bristol and of the UK Data Protection Act.

Once consent forms are returned via email, they will be saved on the university server for safe storage. File names with participants will be stored on the University server in a separate place. All interview data will be recorded on an encrypted recorder and then transferred to university network as soon as possible. I will only have physical form (i.e., paper copies) of transcripts from observations. As observation notes will still be recorded on paper, they will be locked away cabinet to which only I have access. No names of professional will be recorded on observation notes; instead, letter codes will be used. Once they have been scanned and saved onto the university network, paper copies will be confidentially destroyed.

12.	CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY	Yes	No
	All my data will be stored on a password protected server	X	

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I will only transfer unanonymised data if it is encrypted. (For advice on encryption see: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/infosec/uobdata/encrypt/device/)	**X**	
If there is a potential for participants to disclose illegal activity or harm to others you will need to provide a confidentiality protocol.	**X**	
Please tick the box to **CONFIRM** that you warned participants on the information and consent forms that there are limits to confidentiality and that at the end of the project data will be stored in a secure storage facility. https://www.acrc.bris.ac.uk/acrc/storage.htm	**X**	

Please outline your procedure for ensuring confidentiality and anonymity.

All information provided by the professionals will be treated as confidential and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Data will be stored securely on an encrypted device and then transferred as soon as possible to the university server. Transcribed data will not feature any names. At the start of interviews participants will be asked not to use any names of children young people or other professionals. Pseudo-names or initials will be used when making notes in the observation. I will not record actually names of participants from observation. Participants will be made aware of limits to confidentiality in relation to disclosures of harm or illegal. Participants will also be made aware (through verbal input at the start of interviews, participant information and debrief sheets) that whilst the research remains to keep them anonymous there is a possibility that when including some of their direct quotes, they may be identifiable in the report and final thesis to other professionals in the service should these.

DATA MANAGEMENT

13 Data Management
It is RCUK and University of Bristol policy that all research data (including qualitative data e.g., interview transcripts, videos, etc.) should be stored in an anonymised format and made freely and openly available for other researchers to use via the data. Bris Research Data Repository and/or the UK Data Archive. What level of future access to your anonymised data will there be:

- Open access?

- Restricted access - what restrictions?

- Closed access - on what grounds?

This raises a number of ethical issues, for example you MUST ensure that consent is requested to allow data to be shared and reused.

   Please briefly explain.

1) How will you obtain specific consent for data preservation and sharing with other researchers?

2) How will you protect the identity of participants? e.g., how will you anonymise your data for reuse.

3) How will the data be licensed for reuse? e.g. Do you plan to place any restrictions on the reuse of your data such as Creative Common Share Alike 2.0 licence (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/uk/)

4) Where will you archive your data and metadata for re-use by other researchers?

Participants will be made aware on the consent forms that they are consenting for data to be kept anonymised on the university server and future access to the data will be open access. Participants will be randomly assigned a pseudo-name to protect their identity. Data that is identifiable will be removed during the transcribing process wherever possible. Data will be stored and in an anonymised format and made freely and openly available for other researchers to use via the data. bris Research Data Repository and/or the UK data Archive.

SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS

14. Secondary Data Analysis

Please briefly explain (if relevant to your research).

(1) What secondary datasets you will use?

(2) Where did you get these data from (e.g., ESRC Data Archive)?

(3) How did you obtain permission to use these data? (e.g., by signing an end user licence)

(4) Do you plan to make derived variables and/or analytical syntax available to other researchers? (e.g., by archiving them on data. bris or at the UK Data Archive)

(5) Where will you store the secondary datasets?

N/A

PLEASE COMPLETE FOR ALL PROJECTS

15.	**DISSEMINATION OF FINDINGS [maximum 200 words]:** Are you planning to send copies of data to participants for them to check/comment on? If so, in what format and under what conditions? What is the anticipated use of the data, forms of publication and dissemination of findings etc.? .

I will conclude all interview by summarising their understanding of the discussion to check this is accurate. Participants will be sent an encrypted email with their transcripts (both interview and observation) and asked to check this for accuracy before the analysis of the data. Participants will have an additional two weeks to check the transcripts from the date the emailing had been sent. In the circumstances that I do not hear back from the participants I will assume that they feel the transcription to be accurate.

The final stage of illuminative evaluation is to meet with the Head of Seabreeze to explore the research findings and share a report of the findings/future recommendations based on the research findings and previous literature (approximately July 2021). This report and findings will be anonymous. The report will be firstly approved by thesis/ placement supervisor before it is shared with head of Seabreeze, final adjustments may be made following this meeting. A summary of this report can then be disseminated to service professional and other participants who took part in the research. All participants will be aware of how they can access a copy of the full report (debrief sheet). The report will be published as part of the DEd Psyh thesis, and it is possible that it may further be written up and published in a research journal.

16.	**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**: Please identify which of the following documents, and how many, you will be submitting within your application: Guidance is given at the end of this document (appendix 1) on what each of these additional materials might contain.

Additional Material:	NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS
Participant's information sheets - interviews	4
Participant information sheet - observations	1
Consent forms - interviews	1
Consent form – observation	1
Confidentiality protocol	3
Interview Schedules	4
Observation Schedule	1

Please DO NOT send your research proposal or research bid as the Committee will not look at this

SUBMITTING AND REVIEWING YOUR PROPOSAL:

- To submit your application you should create a **single Word document** which contains your application form and all additional material and submit this information to the SPS Research Ethics Administrator by email to sps-ethics@bristol.ac.uk

- If you are having problems with this then please contact the SPS Research Ethics Administrator by email (sps-ethics@bristol.ac.uk) to discuss.

- Your form will then be circulated to the SPS Research Ethics Committee who will review your proposal on the basis of the information provided in this single PDF document. The likely response time is outlined in the 'Ethics Procedures' document. For staff applications we try to turn these around in 2-3 weeks. Doctoral student applications should be submitted by the relevant meeting deadline and will be turned around in 4 weeks.

- Should the Committee have any questions or queries after reviewing your application, the chair will contact you directly. If the Committee makes any recommendations you should confirm, in writing, that you will adhere to these recommendations before receiving approval for your project.

- Should your research change following approval it is your responsibility to inform the Committee in writing and seek clarification about whether the changes in circumstance require further ethical consideration.

Failure to obtain Ethical Approval for research is considered research misconduct by the University and is dealt with under their current misconduct rules.

Chair: Beth Tarleton (beth.tarleton@bristol.ac.uk)

Administrator: Hannah Blackman (sps-ethics@bristol.ac.uk)

Date form updated by SPS REC: January 2019

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A study exploring alternative learning provision as a preventative approach to permanent school exclusion.

Participant information sheet for Interviews (Schools)

Dear XXX,

Who am I?

My name is Jas Kandola, and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist currently on placement in XXX. As part of the training all trainees must complete a research doctoral thesis around a topic of interest. I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with some information regarding the research you might be considering taking part in.

The purpose:

The main purpose of this research is to explore from key stakeholders how children and young people access alternative learning provisions (APs) as a preventative approach to school permanent exclusion. How can accessing APs in these situations help? Specifically, this research would also like to explore the strengths and areas of developments of the current processes (AP Panel) that schools use to access funded places to these provisions. E.g. what is working well and what can be further developed.

 Furthermore, it was highlighted in research and nationally in practice that sometimes children and young people who are placed in these provisions, often have Special Educational Needs that have not been identified. This is a current development point in this Local Authority. I would like to explore the potential barriers that schools might face in accessing additional support. The research will also aim to explore from your viewpoint the solutions to these barriers. Finally, the research aims to explore how professionals view the Educational Psychologist (EPs) role in this process. How do key stakeholders think EPs can support in these circumstances, to ensure the best outcome for children and young people.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been chosen to take part as you are one of the school professionals to submit cases for consideration at the AP Panel to access a funded place at an AP.

What is the benefit?

This is your opportunity as a key stakeholder to share your experiences, views, and thoughts regarding the above. It will help to develop future practices and policies within the Local Authority to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people. Your contribution could make a difference.

What will happen if I take part?

If you give consent to take part in the research, you will be invited to take part in a semi-structured interview with me at a time most convenient to you via Microsoft Teams. The interview can be arranged either by email or phone. The interview will consist of 9-10 questions seeking your views on the above. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions as they are just a way of exploring your views and thoughts. The interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes and will be voice recorded with your consent, so it can be transcribed at a later stage. Recordings will be made on an encrypted device and transferred to a secure server as soon as possible. The recording will be destroyed once they have been transcribed. All transcripts will be anonymised and kept confidential. Data will be anonymised by the removal of names and identifiable features. You will be sent your transcription via an encrypted email once it has been transcribed for you to check for accuracy and remove any specific comments you no longer want to be included. If I do not hear from you within two weeks, I will assume that the transcription is accurate and that you are happy for me to use this in the research.

It is important to note that if during the interview, if any information is given that would suggest concerns for the welfare of any child or young person or any suspicious activity, then this will be passed onto the relevant professionals.

What will my information be used for?

The information you provide will be used to identify common themes in how key stakeholders view the use of APs for children at risk of permanent exclusion, and the current processes to access them. In addition to, how these processes can be further developed, what is working well, and how EPs can best support. This information will be used to inform future decision making, practice, and policy to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people.

On completion of the research, I will provide a summary of my findings, and this will be disseminated in the LA, to schools and APs who took part. A full copy of the report can be accessed by individual participants on request. The information from the research will also be used in the Doctoral Thesis that will be submitted to the University of Bristol.

Confidentially & Limits of Anonymity:

To preserve your anonymity your name will not appear on any transcriptions, and you can withdraw from the research at any time, however, I will not be able to comply with this request if the data has been anonymised. If you chose to withdraw and it is possible, your interview transcription will be destroyed and not be included any further in the research.

All data will be stored on a Password Protected University computer which only I will have access to. Once data is anonymised it might be shared with my thesis supervisor so that he can help to analyse the data.

I would like to reiterate that during this process your identity will remain anonymous, and confidentiality will always be maintained. Although I will always keep your data confidential there is no guarantee that you won't be identifiable by the cases/ experiences or views you chose to share with me. However, this risk is lessened given the scale of this research e.g. I will be interviewing a number of professional/key stakeholders from schools, APs, and in the LA. You also will have the opportunity to read your transcript and remove features that you think will make you identifiable or specific comments you do not wish me to include.

Anonymised data will be available on the University of Bristol's secure data storage for future research projects with your consent.

Should I participate or not?

I would very much hope that you would like to take part in this opportunity to share your experiences, views, and thoughts. However, it is entirely your decision whether you chose to take part in this research, and I respect your decision to decline. If you feel that due to the events of COVID-19 you also do not wish to participate, then this is also entirely your decision. There will be no negative consequences if you choose not to take part. Participation is voluntary.

This participant information sheet has been provided to try and answer some of your questions you might have about the research, however, if you feel there is something you would like to ask, please don't hesitate to contact me; my email is sn18413@bristol.ac.uk. If you are not happy at any point and would like to speak to someone else or complain please contact John Franey at 8 Priory Road, School for Policy Studies, Bristol, BS1 1TX: John.Franey@bristol.ac.uk

This study has been approved by the SPS Research Ethics Committee.

Thank you for taking the time to read this participant information sheet your participation would be greatly appreciated should you wish to take part. If you would like to participate in this research, please sign and return the consent form via email

Kind regards,

Jas Kandola

Trainee Educational Psychologist

Sn18413@bristol.ac.uk

Dr John Franey

Thesis Supervisor

John.Franey@Bristol.ac.uk

School for Policy Studies

8 Priory Road
Bristol BS8 1TZ
Tel: +44 (0)117 954 6738
Fax: +44 (0)117 954 6756
bristol.ac.uk/sps

A study exploring alternative learning provision as a preventative approach to permanent school exclusion.

Participant information sheet for Interviews (APs)

Dear XXX,

Who am I?

My name is Jas Kandola, and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist currently on placement in XXX. As part of the training all trainees must complete a research doctoral thesis around a topic of interest. I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with some information regarding the research you might be considering taking part in.

The purpose:

The main purpose of this research is to explore from key stakeholders how children and young people access alternative provisions (APs) as a preventative approach to school permanent exclusion. How can accessing APs in these situations help? Specifically, this research would also like to explore the strengths and areas of developments of the current processes (AP Panel) that schools use to access funded places to these provisions. E.g., what is working well and what can be further developed.

 Furthermore, it was highlighted in research and nationally in practice that sometimes children and young people who are placed in these provisions, often have Special Educational Needs that have not been identified. This is a current development point in this Local Authority. I would like to explore the potential barriers that schools might face in accessing additional support. The research will also aim to explore from your viewpoint the solutions to these barriers. Finally, the research aims to explore how professionals view the Educational Psychologist (EPs) role in this process. How do key stakeholders think EPs can support in these circumstances, to ensure the best outcome for children and young people.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been chosen to take part as you are one of the funded AP that the LA authority might use for a child or young person at risk of permanent exclusion. You have also been chosen as you currently might have children or young people who are placed in your provision via the LA as a preventative placement.

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What is the benefit?

This is your opportunity as a key stakeholder to share your experiences, views and thoughts regarding the above. It will help to develop future practices and polices within the Local Authority to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people. Your contribution could make a difference.

What will happen if I take part?

If you give consent to take part in the research, you will be invited to take part in a semi-structured interview with me at a time most convenient to you via Microsoft Teams. The interview can be arranged either by email or phone. The interview will consist of 9-10 questions seeking your views on the above. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions as they are just a way of exploring your views and thoughts. The interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes and will be voice recorded with your consent, so it can be transcribed at a later stage. Recordings will be made on an encrypted device and transferred to a secure server as soon as possible. The recording will be destroyed once they have been transcribed. All transcripts will be anonymised and kept confidential. Data will be anonymised by the removal of names and identifiable features. You will be sent your transcription via an encrypted email once it has been transcribed for you to check for accuracy and remove any specific comments you no longer want to be included. If I do not hear from you within two weeks, I will assume that the transcription is accurate and that you are happy for me to use this in the research.

It is important to note that if during the interview, if any information is given that would suggest concerns for the welfare of any child or young person or any suspicious activity, then this will be passed onto the relevant professionals.

What will my information be used for?

The information you provide will be used to identify common themes in how key stakeholders view the use of APs for children at risk of permanent exclusion, and the current processes to access them. In addition to, how these processes can be further developed, what is working well, and how EPs can best support. This information will be used to inform future decision making, practice, and policy to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people.

On completion of the research, I will provide a summary of my findings, and this will be disseminated in the LA, to schools and APs who took part. A full copy of the report can be accessed by individual participants on request. The information from the research will also be used in the Doctoral Thesis that will be submitted to the University of Bristol.

Confidentially & Limits of Anonymity:

To preserve your anonymity your name will not appear on any transcriptions, and you can withdraw from the research at any time, however, I will not be able to comply with this request if the data has been anonymised. If you chose to withdraw and it is possible, your interview transcription will be destroyed and not be included any further in the research.

All data will be stored on a Password Protected University computer which only I will have access to. Once data is anonymised it might be shared with my thesis supervisor so that he can help to analyse the data.

I would like to reiterate that during this process your identity will remain anonymous, and confidentiality will always be maintained. Although I will always keep your data confidential there is no guarantee that you won't be identifiable by the cases/ experiences or views you chose to share with me. However, this risk is lessened given the scale of this research e.g. I will be interviewing a number of professional/key stakeholders from schools, APs, and in the LA. You also will have the opportunity to read your transcript and remove features that you think will make you identifiable or specific comments you do not wish me to include.

Anonymised data will be available on the University of Bristol's secure data storage for future research projects with your consent.

Should I participate or not?

I would very much hope that you would like to take part in this opportunity to share your experiences, views, and thoughts. However, it is entirely your decision whether you chose to take part in this research, and I respect your decision to decline. If you feel that due to the events of COVID-19 you also do not wish to participate, then this is also entirely your decision. There will be no negative consequences if you choose not to take part. Participation is voluntary.

This participant information sheet has been provided to try and answer some of your questions you might have about the research, however, if you feel there is something you would like to ask, please don't hesitate to contact me; my email is sn18413@bristol.ac.uk. If you are not happy at any point and would like to speak to someone else or complain please contact John Franey at 8 Priory Road, School for Policy Studies, Bristol, BS1 1TX: John.Franey@bristol.ac.uk

This study has been approved by the SPS Research Ethics Committee.

Thank you for taking the time to read this participant information sheet your participation would be greatly appreciated should you wish to take part. If you would like to participate in this research, please sign and return the consent form via email

Kind regards,

Jas Kandola   Dr John Franey

Trainee Educational Psychologist   Thesis Supervisor

Sn18413@bristol.ac.uk   John.Franey@Bristol.ac.uk

School for Policy Studies

A study exploring alternative learning provision as a preventative approach to permanent school exclusion.

Participant information sheet for Interviews (Educational Psychologists)

Dear XXX,

Who am I?

My name is Jas Kandola, and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist currently on placement in XXX. As part of the training all trainees must complete a research doctoral thesis around a topic of interest. I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with some information regarding the research you might be considering taking part in.

The purpose:

The main purpose of this research is to explore from key stakeholders how children and young people access alternative learning provisions (APs) as a preventative approach to school permanent exclusion. How can accessing APs in these situations help? Specifically, this research would also like to explore the strengths and areas of developments of the current processes (AP Panel) that schools use to access funded places to these provisions. E.g., what is working well and what can be further developed.

Furthermore, it was highlighted in research and nationally in practice that sometimes children and young people who are placed in these provisions, often have Special Educational Needs that have not been identified. This is a current development point in this Local Authority. I would like to explore the potential barriers that schools might face in accessing additional support. The research will also aim to explore from your viewpoint the solutions to these barriers. Finally, the research aims to explore how professionals view the Educational Psychologist (EPs) role in this process. How do key stakeholders think EPs can support in these circumstances, to ensure the best outcome for children and young people.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been chosen to take part as you are an EP who at some point might have been involved in the strategic development of the AP Panel and/or the development of the local authorities offer regarding the use of the Alternative provisions. You might also have been

chosen to be involved as you recently had a case that went to panel and as a result the child or young person attended one of the funded APs.

What is the benefit?

This is your opportunity as a key stakeholder to share your experiences, views and thoughts regarding the above. It will help to develop future practices and polices within the Local Authority to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people. Your contribution could make a difference.

What will happen if I take part?

If you give consent to take part in the research, you will be invited to take part in a semi-structured interview with me at a time most convenient to you via Microsoft Teams. The interview can be arranged either by email or phone. The interview will consist of 9-10 questions seeking your views on the above. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions as they are just a way of exploring your views and thoughts. The interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes and will be voice recorded with your consent, so it can be transcribed at a later stage. Recordings will be made on an encrypted device and transferred to a secure server as soon as possible. The recording will be destroyed once they have been transcribed. All transcripts will be anonymised and kept confidential. Data will be anonymised by the removal of names and identifiable features. You will be sent your transcription via an encrypted email once it has been transcribed for you to check for accuracy and remove any specific comments you no longer want to be included. If I do not hear from you within two weeks, I will assume that the transcription is accurate and that you are happy for me to use this in the research.

It is important to note that if during the interview, if any information is given that would suggest concerns for the welfare of any child or young person or any suspicious activity, then this will be passed onto the relevant professionals.

What will my information be used for?

The information you provide will be used to identify common themes in how key stakeholders view the use of APs for children at risk of permanent exclusion, and the current processes to access them. In addition to, how these processes can be further developed, what is working well, and how EPs can best support. This information will be used to inform future decision making, practice, and policy to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people.

On completion of the research, I will provide a summary of my findings, and this will be disseminated in the LA, to schools and APs who took part. A full copy of the report can be accessed by individual participants on request. The information from the research will also be used in the Doctoral Thesis that will be submitted to the University of Bristol.

Confidentially & Limits of Anonymity:

To preserve your anonymity your name will not appear on any transcriptions, and you can withdraw from the research at any time, however, I will not be able to comply with this request if the data has been anonymised. If you chose to withdraw and it is possible, your interview transcription will be destroyed and not be included any further in the research.

All data will be stored on a Password Protected University computer which only I will have access to. Once data is anonymised it might be shared with my thesis supervisor so that he can help to analyse the data.

I would like to reiterate that during this process your identity will remain anonymous, and confidentiality will always be maintained. Although I will always keep your data confidential there is no guarantee that you won't be identifiable by the cases/ experiences or views you chose to share with me. However, this risk is lessened given the scale of this research e.g. I will be interviewing a number of professional/key stakeholders from schools, APs, and in the LA. You also will have the opportunity to read your transcript and remove features that you think will make you identifiable or specific comments you do not wish me to include.

Anonymised data will be available on the University of Bristol's secure data storage for future research projects with your consent.

Should I participate or not?

I would very much hope that you would like to take part in this opportunity to share your experiences, views, and thoughts. However, it is entirely your decision whether you chose to take part in this research, and I respect your decision to decline. If you feel that due to the events of COVID-19 you also do not wish to participate, then this is also entirely your decision. There will be no negative consequences if you choose not to take part. Participation is voluntary.

This participant information sheet has been provided to try and answer some of your questions you might have about the research, however, if you feel there is something you would like to ask, please don't hesitate to contact me; my email is sn18413@bristol.ac.uk. If you are not happy at any point and would like to speak to someone else or complain please contact John Franey at 8 Priory Road, School for Policy Studies, Bristol, BS1 1TX: John.Franey@bristol.ac.uk

This study has been approved by the SPS Research Ethics Committee.

Thank you for taking the time to read this participant information sheet your participation would be greatly appreciated should you wish to take part. If you would like to participate in this research, please sign and return the consent form via email

Kind regards,

Jas Kandola   Dr John Franey

Trainee Educational Psychologist   Thesis Supervisor

Sn18413@bristol.ac.uk   John.Franey@bristol.ac.uk

School for Policy Studies

A study exploring alternative learning provision as a preventative approach to permanent school exclusion.

Participant information sheet for Interviews (AP Panel Members)

Dear XXX,

Who am I?

My name is Jas Kandola, and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist currently on placement in XXX. As part of the training all trainees must complete a research doctoral thesis around a topic of interest. I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with some information regarding the research you might be considering taking part in.

The purpose:

The main purpose of this research is to explore from key stakeholders how children and young people access alternative learning provisions (APs) as a preventative approach to school permanent exclusion. How can accessing APs in these situations help? Specifically, this research would also like to explore the strengths and areas of developments of the current processes (AP Panel) that schools use to access funded places to these provisions. E.g., what is working well and what can be further developed.

Furthermore, it was highlighted in research and nationally in practice that sometimes children and young people who are placed in these provisions, often have Special Educational Needs that have not been identified. This is a current development point in this Local Authority. I would like to explore the potential barriers that schools might face in accessing additional support. The research will also aim to explore from your viewpoint the solutions to these barriers. Finally, the research aims to explore how professionals view the Educational Psychologist (EPs) role in this process. How do key stakeholders think EPs can support in these circumstances, to ensure the best outcome for children and young people.

What is the benefit?

This is your opportunity as a key stakeholder to share your experiences, views and thoughts regarding the above. It will help to develop future practices and polices within the Local Authority to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people. Your contribution could make a difference.

What will happen if I take part?

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If you give consent to take part in the research, you will be invited to take part in a semi-structured interview with me at a time most convenient to you via Microsoft Teams. The interview can be arranged either by email or phone. The interview will consist of 9-10 questions seeking your views on the above. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions as they are just a way of exploring your views and thoughts. The interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes and will be voice recorded with your consent, so it can be transcribed at a later stage. Recordings will be made on an encrypted device and transferred to a secure server as soon as possible. The recording will be destroyed once they have been transcribed. All transcripts will be anonymised and kept confidential. Data will be anonymised by the removal of names and identifiable features. You will be sent your transcription via an encrypted email once it has been transcribed for you to check for accuracy and remove any specific comments you no longer want to be included. If I do not hear from you within two weeks, I will assume that the transcription is accurate and that you are happy for me to use this in the research.

It is important to note that if during the interview, if any information is given that would suggest concerns for the welfare of any child or young person or any suspicious activity, then this will be passed onto the relevant professionals.

Why have I been invited for an interview?

You have been chosen to take part as in the interviews as you are one of the members of the AP Panel and a key stakeholder in the discussions around whether a child or young person should access an ALP as a preventive approach to school permanent exclusions.

What will my information be used for?

The information you provide will be used to identify common themes in how key stakeholders view the use of APs for children at risk of permanent exclusion, and the current processes to access them. In addition to, how these processes can be further developed, what is working well, and how EPs can best support. This information will be used to inform future decision making, practice, and policy to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people.

On completion of the research, I will provide a summary of my findings, and this will be disseminated in the LA, to schools and APs who took part. A full copy of the report can be accessed by individual participants on request. The information from the research will also be used in the Doctoral Thesis that will be submitted to the University of Bristol.

Confidentially & Limits of Anonymity:

To preserve your anonymity your name will not appear on any transcriptions, and you can withdraw from the research at any time, however, I will not be able to comply with this request if the data has been anonymised. If you chose to withdraw and it is possible, your interview transcription will be destroyed and not be included any further in the research.

All data will be stored on a Password Protected University computer which only I will have access to. Once data is anonymised it might be shared with my thesis supervisor so that he can help to analyse the data.

I would like to reiterate that during this process your identity will remain anonymous, and confidentiality will always be maintained. Although I will always keep your data confidential there is no guarantee that you won't be identifiable by the cases/ experiences or views you

chose to share with me. However, this risk is lessened given the scale of this research e.g. I will be interviewing a number of professional/key stakeholders from schools, APs, and in the LA. You also will have the opportunity to read your transcript and remove features that you think will make you identifiable or specific comments you do not wish me to include.

Anonymised data will be available on the University of Bristol's secure data storage for future research projects with your consent.

Should I participate or not?

I would very much hope that you would like to take part in this opportunity to share your experiences, views, and thoughts. However, it is entirely your decision whether you chose to take part in this research, and I respect your decision to decline. If you feel that due to the events of COVID-19 you also do not wish to participate, then this is also entirely your decision. There will be no negative consequences if you choose not to take part. Participation is voluntary.

This participant information sheet has been provided to try and answer some of your questions you might have about the research, however, if you feel there is something you would like to ask, please don't hesitate to contact me; my email is sn18413@bristol.ac.uk. If you are not happy at any point and would like to speak to someone else or complain please contact John Franey at 8 Priory Road, School for Policy Studies, Bristol, BS1 1TX: John.Franey@bristol.ac.uk

This study has been approved by the SPS Research Ethics Committee.

Thank you for taking the time to read this participant information sheet your participation would be greatly appreciated should you wish to take part. If you would like to participate in this research, please sign and return the consent form via email.

Kind regards,

Jas Kandola   Dr John Franey

Trainee Educational Psychologist   Thesis Supervisor

Sn18413@bristol.ac.uk   John.Franey@bristol.ac.uk

School for Policy Studies

A study exploring alternative learning provision as a preventative approach to permanent school exclusion.

Participant information sheet for observations (AP Panel members & additional attendees)

Dear XXX,

Who am I?

My name is Jas Kandola, and I am a Trainee Educational Psychologist currently on placement in XXX. As part of the training all trainees must complete a research doctoral thesis around a topic of interest. I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with some information regarding the research you might be considering taking part in.

The purpose:

The main purpose of this research is to explore from key stakeholders how children and young people access alternative learning provisions (APs) as a preventative approach to school permanent exclusion. How can accessing APs in these situations help? Specifically, this research would also like to explore the strengths and areas of developments of the current processes (AP Panel) that schools use to access funded places to these provisions. E.g., what is working well and what can be further developed.

Furthermore, it was highlighted in research and nationally in practice that sometimes children and young people who are placed in these provisions, often have Special Educational Needs that have not been identified. This is a current development point in this Local Authority. I would like to explore the potential barriers that schools might face in accessing additional support. The research will also aim to explore from your viewpoint the solutions to these barriers. Finally, the research aims to explore how professionals view the Educational Psychologist (EPs) role in this process. How do key stakeholders think EPs can support in these circumstances, to ensure the best outcome for children and young people.

What is the benefit?

This is an opportunity for research to explore the current processes regarding the above and will help to develop future practices and polices within the Local Authority to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people.

What will happen if I take part?

If you give me consent the study includes observations of the AP Panel via Microsoft Teams until fieldwork is resumed (post COVID-19). I will be making notes on who attends these meetings, what is discussed in these meetings, and what information is used to determine the outcomes for the children and young people discussed. Panel attendee's names, the names of families and young people will not be recorded as part of my observation. Neither will I record any specific or sensitive information relating to the cases discussed. The purpose of the observation is to illuminate what is happening in practice, it is not to judge any professional but rather help inform best practice. Notes will be stored in a locked cabinet until they can be scanned and stored on a secure server, paper notes will then be confidentially destroyed.

If you chose not to consent to participate, then when observations take place, I will not observe you or make notes around what you say. If you have any concerns surrounding this, please do not hesitate to contact me or the head of Seabreeze.

What will my information be used for?

The information you provide will be used to identify common themes in how key stakeholders view the use of APs for children at risk of permanent exclusion, and the current processes to access them. In addition to, how these processes can be further developed, what is working well, and how EPs can best support. This information will be used to inform future decision making, practice, and policy to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people.

On completion of the research, I will provide a summary of my findings, and this will be disseminated in the LA, to schools and APs who took part. A full copy of the report can be accessed by individual participants on request. The information from the research will also be used in the Doctoral Thesis that will be submitted to the University of Bristol.

Confidentially & Limits of Anonymity:

To preserve your anonymity your name will not appear on any observation notes, and you can withdraw from the research at any time, however, I will not be able to comply with this request if the data has been analysed. All data will be stored on a Password Protected University computer which only I will have access to. Once data is anonymised it might be shared with my thesis supervisors so that they can help to analyse the data. Once scanned the transcripts of observation will be sent to you via an encrypted email. This will be your opportunity to remove any specific comments you do not want me to include. If I do not here back from you within two weeks, I will assume that you are happy for me to use the data.

I would like to reiterate that during this process your identity will remain anonymous, and confidentiality will always be maintained. Although I will always keep your data confidential there is no guarantee that you won't be identifiable by the comments that you make during observations. However, as mentioned previously, you also will have the opportunity to read your transcript and remove specific comments you do not wish me to include.

Anonymised data will be available on the University of Bristol's secure data storage for future research projects with your consent.

Should I participate or not?

I would very much hope that you would like to take part in this opportunity to share your experiences, views, and thoughts. However, it is entirely your decision whether you chose to take part in this research, and I respect your decision to decline. If you feel that due to the events of COVID-19 you also do not wish to participate, then this is also entirely your decision. There will be no negative consequences if you choose not to take part. Participation is voluntary.

This participant information sheet has been provided to try and answer some of your questions you might have about the research, however, if you feel there is something you would like to ask, please don't hesitate to contact me; my email is sn18413@bristol.ac.uk. If you are not happy at any point and would like to speak to someone else or complain please contact John Franey at 8 Priory Road, School for Policy Studies, Bristol, BS1 1TX: John.Franey@bristol.ac.uk

This study has been approved by the SPS Research Ethics Committee.

Thank you for taking the time to read this participant information sheet your participation would be greatly appreciated should you wish to take part. If you would like to participate in this research, please sign and return the consent form via email.

Kind regards,

Jas Kandola   Dr John Franey

Trainee Educational Psychologist   Thesis Supervisor

Sn18413@bristol.ac.uk   John.Franey@bristol.ac.uk

Appendix 5: Consent forms

School for Policy Studies

8 Priory Road
Bristol BS8 1TZ
Tel: +44 (0)117 954 6738
Fax: +44 (0)117 954 6756
bristol.ac.uk/sps

A study exploring alternative learning provision as a preventative approach to permanent school exclusion.

Consent Forms (Observation for AP Panel members & additional attendees)

Please tick the appropriate boxes:

1. Taking part in the study:

	Yes	No
I have read and understood the study information dated [DD/MM/YYYY], or it has been read to me. I have been able to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.	◯	◯
I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason. However, I also understand that I cannot withdraw my data once data has been anonymised and analysed.	◯	◯
I understand that taking part in the study involves being observed in session at the AP Panel via Microsoft Teams until fieldwork is resumed (post COVID-19).	◯	◯
I have read, been able to ask question and understand the confidentiality protocol.	◯	◯
I agree that my information can be quoted in research findings and report.	◯	◯

2. Use of the information in the study

	Yes	No
I understand that information taken in observation will be anonymised and used for a report that will be given to head of XSupport and as part of a Doctoral Thesis submitted to the University of Bristol. This might also be published at a later stage.	◯	◯
I understand that no personal information will be collected/recorded about me that can identify me, such as my name or job role.	◯	◯

I understand that the anonymised data will be stored safely on a secure network. ◯ ◯

3. Future use and reuse of the information by others

                                                                          Yes   No

I give permission for the anonymised interview/observation data that I provide will ◯ ◯
be deposited in ukdata so it can be used for future research and learning.

Participant's Consent:

_____   _____   _____
        Print Name   Signature   Date

For Researcher:

I have provided the information sheet and confidentiality protocol to the potential
participant and, to the best of my ability, ensured that the participant understands to what
they are freely consenting.

_____   _____   _____
        Print Name   Signature   Date

Please return consent to sn18413@bristol.ac.uk.

School for Policy Studies

8 Priory Road
Bristol BS8 1TZ
Tel: +44 (0)117 954 6738
Fax: +44 (0)117 954 6756
bristol.ac.uk/sps

A study exploring alternative learning provision as a preventative approach to permanent school exclusion.

Consent Forms (interviews for all participants)

Please tick the appropriate boxes:

1. **Taking part in the study:**

	Yes	No
I have read and understood the study information dated [DD/MM/YYYY], or it has been read to me. I have been able to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.	◯	◯
I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason. However, I also understand that I cannot withdraw my data once data has been anonymised and analysed.	◯	◯
I understand that taking part in the study involves an interview for approximately 1 hour via Microsoft Teams until fieldwork is resumed (post COVID-19) when this can be held face to face.	◯	◯
I understand that taking part in the interviews I may be indefinable by the stories, experiences I chose to share, and this is a potential risk.	◯	◯
I have read, been able to ask question and understand the confidentiality protocol.	◯	◯

2. Use of the information in the study

	Yes	No
I understand that information I provide will be anonymised and used for a report that will be given to head of XSupport and as part of a Doctoral Thesis submitted to the University of Bristol. This might also be published at a later stage.	◯	◯
I understand that personal information collected about me that can identify me, such as my name or job role, will not be shared with anyone.	◯	◯
I agree that my information can be quoted in research findings and report.	◯	◯

3. Future use and reuse of the information by others

	Yes	No
I give permission for the anonymised interview/observation data that I provide will be deposited in ukdata so it can be used for future research and learning.	◯	◯

Please indicate how you would like to be contacted to arrange an interview:

Email ◯ Phone ◯

Email/Contact number_____

Participant's Consent:

_____   _____   _____

Print Name   Signature   Date

For Researcher:

I have provided the information sheet and confidentiality protocol to the potential participant and, to the best of my ability, ensured that the participant understands to what they are freely consenting.

_____   _____   _____

Print Name   Signature   Date

Appendix 6: Confidentiality protocol

School for Policy Studies

University of BRISTOL

8 Priory Road
Bristol BS8 1TZ
Tel: +44 (0)117 954 6738
Fax: +44 (0)117 954 6756
bristol.ac.uk/sps

A study exploring the processes surrounding the use of alternative learning provision as a preventative approach to permanent school exclusion and how this can help the child or young person.

Confidentiality Protocols (School)

This research project is deigned to explore the process and use of alternative learning provisions as a preventive approach for children and young people at risk of permeant school. This includes what is working well, what could be further developed and do professionals feel the EP can support to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people.

All data obtained through-out this study will be anonymised and treated with confidentiality. However, there are limits to this confidentiality. In the event that information is given related to illegal activity, or to an individual being harmed, it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality.

In this instance, any issues of concern will be discussed with the safeguarding officer/lead in the school and the researcher's supervisor as soon as possible after the incident in order to obtain advice or direction. The relevant appropriate authority may need to be informed.

The researcher will endeavour to speak to participants and alert them before hand in the event that this needs to happen, however this may not always be possible. The researcher will still need to pass this information on.

In addition, participants are asked not to use names of children and young people, other colleagues or professionals in order to protect anonymity and confidentiality. Although names will not be used, there is a possibility that participants maybe identifiable by the experiences and views they share with the researcher. This is lessened given the size of the research.

By agreeing to participate in this study, you are agreeing to be bound by the terms of this confidential protocol and agree that the information you share will be treated in this manner.

8 Priory Road
Bristol BS8 1TZ
Tel: +44 (0)117 954 6738
Fax: +44 (0)117 954 6756
bristol.ac.uk/sps

A study exploring the processes surrounding the use of alternative learning provision as a preventative approach to permanent school exclusion and how this can help the child or young person.

Confidentiality Protocols (APs)

This research project is deigned to explore the process and use of alternative learning provisions as a preventive approach for children and young people at risk of permeant school. This includes what is working well, what could be further developed and do professionals feel the EP can support to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people.

All data obtained through-out this study will be anonymised and treated with confidentiality. However, there are limits to this confidentiality. In the event that information is given related to illegal activity, or to an individual being harmed, it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality.

In this instance, any issues of concern will be discussed with the safeguarding officer/lead in the alternative Learning Provision and the researcher's supervisor as soon as possible after the incident in order to obtain advice or direction. The relevant appropriate authority may need to be informed.

The researcher will endeavour to speak to participants and alert them before hand in the event that this needs to happen, however this may not always be possible. The researcher will still need to pass this information on.

In addition, participants are asked not to use names of children and young people, other colleagues or professionals in order to protect anonymity and confidentiality. Although names will not be used, there is a possibility that participants maybe identifiable by the experiences and views they share with the researcher. This is lessened given the size of the research.

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A study exploring the processes surrounding the use of alternative learning provision as a preventative approach to permanent school exclusion and how this can help the child or young person.

Confidentiality Protocols (LA staff e.g., EPs & Panel Members)

This research project is deigned to explore the process and use of alternative learning provisions as a preventive approach for children and young people at risk of permeant school. This includes what is working well, what could be further developed and do professionals feel the EP can support to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people.

All data obtained through-out this study will be anonymised and treated with confidentiality. However, there are limits to this confidentiality. In the event that information is given related to illegal activity, or to an individual being harmed, it may not be possible to maintain confidentiality.

In this instance, any issues of concern will be discussed with the safeguarding officer/lead in the Local Authority and the researcher's supervisor as soon as possible after the incident in order to obtain advice or direction. The relevant appropriate authority may need to be informed.

The researcher will endeavour to speak to participants and alert them before hand in the event that this needs to happen, however this may not always be possible. The researcher will still need to pass this information on.

In addition, participants are asked not to use names of children and young people, other colleagues or professionals in order to protect anonymity and confidentiality. Although names will not be used, there is a possibility that participants maybe identifiable by the experiences and views they share with the researcher. This is lessened given the size of the research.

By agreeing to participate in this study, you are agreeing to be bound by the terms of this confidential protocol and agree that the information you share will be treated in this manner.

Interview topic guide (schools):

NOTE: please ask schools at the start of interviews to refrain from mentioning young people's/ family's names or personal information. This includes specifics around casework.

- How many children are accessing APs from your school?

- Can you share your experiences of using as AP as a preventive to school exclusion?
-
How do you think APs help children and young people and prevent permanent exclusion?

- What influences your decision to submit to children to the panel?

- How are children and young people included in the decision making in school?

- How do you view the current LA processes to access funded APs? What is your thought?

- What do you think influences the decision when panel think about yes or no to placement in APs?

- What do you think is working well with current process e.g., AP Panel?

- How can current processes be improved?

- How do you see the role the EP in supporting in this context e.g, AP, Panel and school?

- What are the barriers to accessing Seabreeze for these children and young people?

- How do you think we overcome these barriers?

Interview topic guide (APs):

NOTE: please ask APs at the start of interviews to refrain from mentioning young people's/ family's names or personal information. This includes specifics around casework.

- How many children are accessing APs as a preventative approach to permanent school exclusion?

- Can you share your experiences of using an AP as a preventive to school exclusion?

-How do you think APs help children and young people and prevent permanent exclusion?

- How do you view the current LA processes to access funded APs? What are your thoughts?

- What do you think influences the decision when panel think about yes or no to placement in APs?

- How are children and young people included in the decision making?

- What do you think is working well with current process e.g., AP-panel?

- How can current processes be improved?

- How do you see the role the EP in supporting in this context e.g., school, AP and Panel?

-What are the barriers to accessing Seabreeze for these children and young people?

- How do you think we overcome these barriers?

Interview topic guide (FAP members):

NOTE: Please ask panel members at the start of interviews to refrain from mentioning young people's/ family's names or personal information. This includes specifics around casework.

- Can you share your experiences and views of using AP as a preventative approach to school exclusion

- How do you think APs help children and young people and prevent permanent exclusion?

- How do you view the current LA processes to access funded APs? What are your thoughts?

- How do you see your role when you attend panel?

- what influences your decision when think about yes or not to placement in APs?

- How are children and young people included in the decision making?

- What do you think is working well with current process e.g., AP panel?

- How can current processes be improved?

- How do you see the role the EP in supporting in this context e.g., school, AP and Panel?

- What are the barriers to accessing Seabreeze for these children and young people?

- How do you think we overcome these barriers?

Interview topic guide (EPs):

NOTE: Please ask EPs at the start of interviews to refrain from mentioning young people's/ family's names or personal information. This includes specifics around casework.

- How many cases have you been involved in which have gone to FAP?

- Can you share your experiences of using an ALP as a preventive to school exclusion?

- How do you view the current LA processes to access funded APs e.g., FAP? What are your thoughts?

- What do you think influences the decision when panel think about yes or not to placement in APs?

-How do you think APs help children and young people and prevent permanent exclusion?

- In the cases you have worked with how were the children and young people included in the decision making?

- What do you think is working well with current process e.g., AP panel?

- How can current processes be improved?

- How do you see the role the EP in supporting in this context e.g., school, AP and Panel

 - What are the barriers to accessing Seabreeze for these children and young people?

- How do you think we overcome these barriers?

Appendix 8: Thematic Analysis of Interviews

Thematic Analysis (TA) was used in the research to analyse the data from the semi-structured interviews. Braun and Clarke (2013) note several advantages and disadvantages of using TA, these have been highlighted in the table below.

Table 8: Strengths and Limitations of TA

Strengths	Weaknesses
Flexibility in terms of theoretical framework, research questions, methods of data collection and sample size	Is perceived by some qualitative researchers as 'something and nothing', as lacking the substance of other 'branded' and theoretically driven approaches like IPA and GT
Accessible to researchers with little or no (qualitative) research experience; a great 'starter' qualitative method	Has limited interpretative power if not used within an existing theoretical framework; in practice analyses often consist simply of (realist) *descriptions* of participants' concerns
Relatively easy and quick to learn, and to do, compared to other more labour-intensive qualitative analytic methods	Lack of concrete guidance for higher level, more interpretative analysis
The results of TA can be accessible to an educated wider audience (for this reason, TA can be an appropriate method for participatory approaches, where the participants have a role in the analysis of the data they help to generate, and is a useful method for applied research)	Because of the focus on patterns across datasets, it cannot provide any sense of the continuity and contradictions within individual accounts; also the 'voices' of individual participants can get lost (especially when working with larger datasets)
	Cannot make claims about the effects of language use (unlike DA, DP or CA)

(Braun and Clarke 2013, p180)

Braun & Clarke (2012) distinguish between a 'deductive' or 'inductive' approach in TA. A deductive approach relies on existing models and theories to determine the codes and is driven by the research questions. An inductive approach searches for codes amongst the data, and findings are compared to the existing research. Due to the constructivist and interpretative approach of this research, an inductive approach was adopted. Meaning the participants' key or salient points could be illuminated, irrespective of their links to the research questions. By doing this, a greater understanding of the participants' perspectives could be gained.

Braun & Clarke (2006; 2012) also considered the difference between 'latent' and 'semantic' themes. Sematic themes are concerned with the "surface meaning" (Braun & Clarke 2006, p84) in the data and are themes that have explicitly been discussed and are based on what participants have said. In contrast, latent theme explores the underlying meaning of what has

been said and the potential reasons and patterns behind participants responses. The research predominately explored the latent themes within the interviews to make sense of participants' perspectives and experiences. TA is conducted systemically through a six staged approach. The following will highlight how this approach was followed in this research.

TA Stages and the current Research

Stage 1: Familiarizing yourself with the data

This stage began with immersing myself in the data, I began this by listening back to the recording, reading my notes and reflections during and after the interviews. Audio data was then listened to several times and verbatim accounts (transcripts) were created. Accounts were transcribed to retain their 'true' original nature (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Furthermore, due to technical difficulties, transcribed data did not save, therefore I transcribed the data twice. Whilst this was unintentional and time consuming it allowed me to familiarise myself with the data further. Once data had been transcribed, transcript were printed and read again before notes where made of items of potential interest (figure 8).
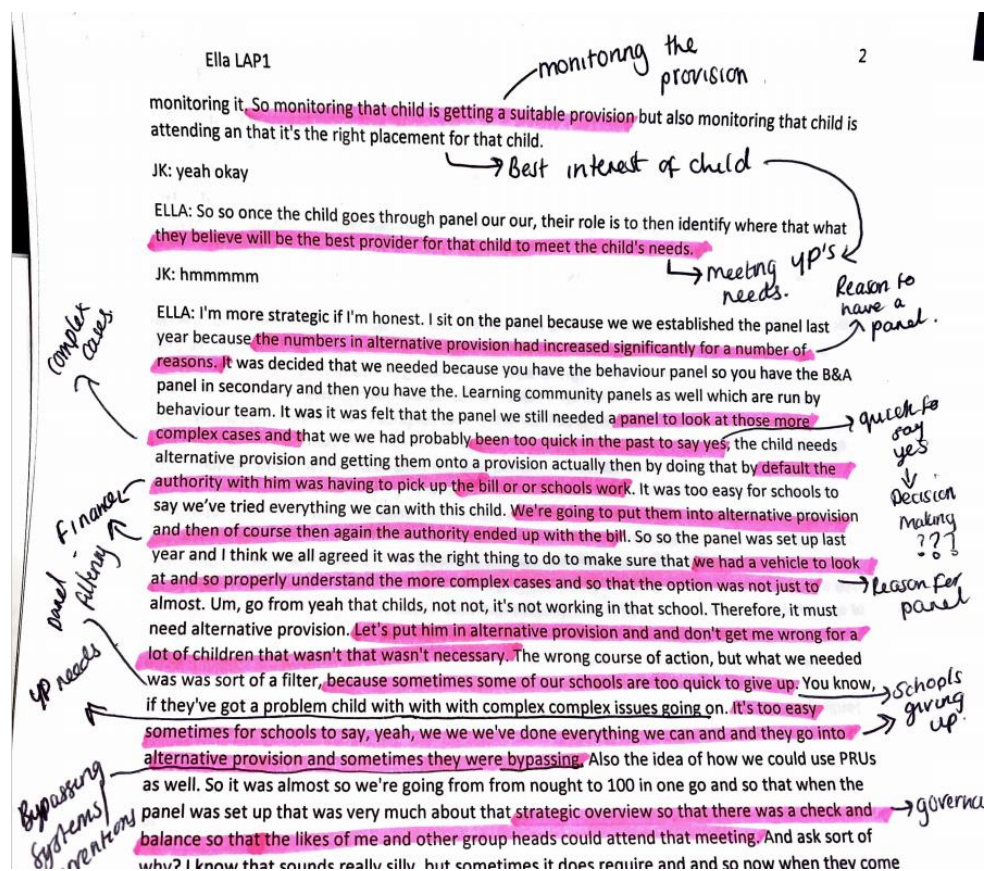

Figure 8: Stage 1 of TA: Notes from Ella's interview.

Stage 2: Generating initial Codes

Stage 2 started with re-reading the transcripts again, initial codes were manually assigned to the data which was considered relevant to the research questions. All transcripts were worked through systemically with equal attention been given to each data item. Once initial coding was completed, the data set was checked again in a different order so the codes which had been identified in later transcriptions could be carefully considered. Subsequently codes evolved through-out the process as an attempt to ensure clarity and uniformity. A diary was used to record these changes.
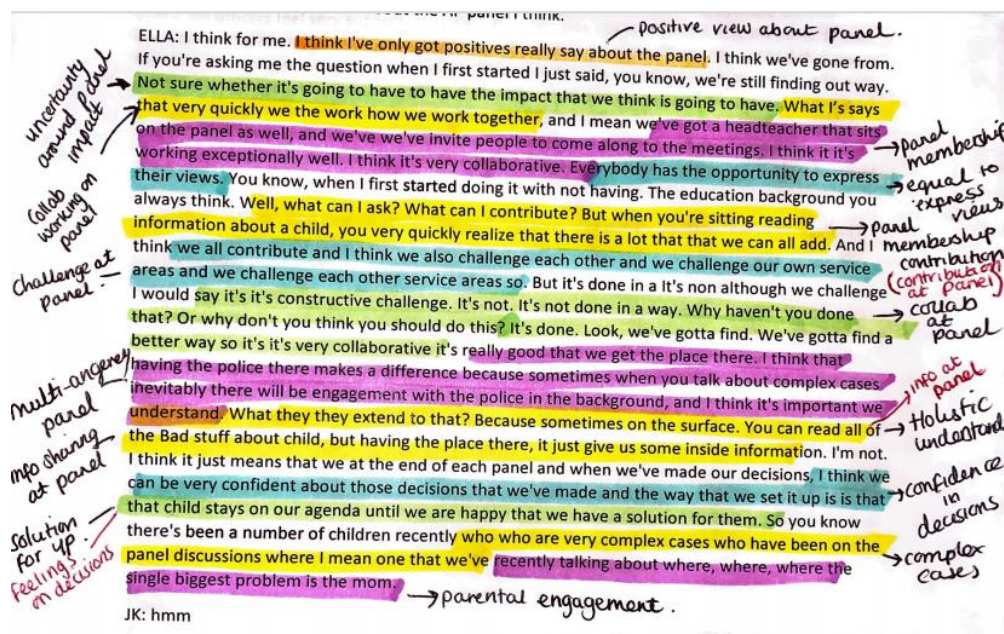
Figure 9: Stage 2 of TA: Example of Ella's coded transcript,

(Initial codes are in black, red indicates where a code label has been reconsidered for uniformness and clarity.)

Stage 3: Searching for themes.

Stage 3 began with printing the transcripts again and manually cutting out the initial codes which had been assigned. I will refer to these coded cut outs as a 'strips'. Strips were collated together by code; the transcripts were read during the process to check for meaning. Strips of the transcript were moved between groups based on further reading of transcripts and through comparing with other codes (figure 10). Codes which were grouped together were further analysed to consider how they may be merged to form overarching themes. New piles were created and were labelled using post it notes (figure 11). A miscellaneous pile was formed to keep codes which did not seem to belong to themes being created.

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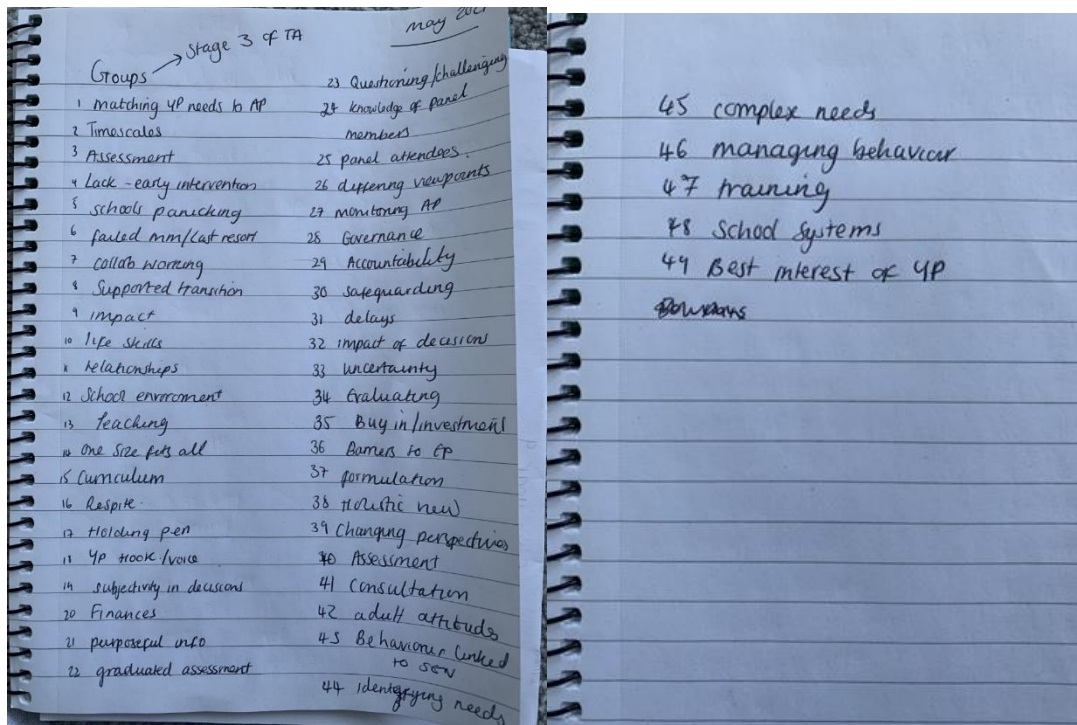
Figure 10: Stage 3 of TA: A list of all the groups of codes following the initial grouping.

Figure 11 Stage 3 of TA: Developing of over-arching themes.

Initial themes and subthemes were recorded, and a thematic map drawn up to help support this process:

AP use
- Failed MM/ Last resort
- Supported transition
- Holding pen
- Respite
- Schools panicking
- Lack of early
- Assessment
- Timescales
- Collaborative working/ Dual Placement
- Matching AP to YP needs
- YP's hook

AP Vs Mainstream
- Impact
- Curriculum
- Relationships
- Teaching
- Life skills
- School Environment
- One size doesn't fit all

Panel Purpose
- Monitoring AP
- Accountability
- Governance
- Best interest of YP
- Safeguarding

Decision Making
- Subjectivity
- YP's Behaviour
- Purposeful information
- Graduated Assessment
- Finances
- Questioning/ challenging

Figure 12: Stage 3 of TA: Initial Thematic Map.

Stage 4: Reviewing potential themes:

Braun and Clarke (2012) provide some useful questions to support stage 4 of TA:

1. Is this a theme (it could be just a code)?

2. If it is a theme, what is the quality of this theme (does it tell me something useful about the data set and my research questions

3. What are the boundaries of this these (what does it include and exclude)?

4. Are there enough (meaningful) data to support this theme (is the theme thick or thin)

5. Are the data too diverse and wide ranging (does the theme lack coherence)?

<div align="right">(Braun & Clarke 2012, p65)</div>

These prompts helped to review the initial themes and subthemes to ensure that there was a clear distinction between themes and that they cohered together meaningfully. Firstly, themes which did not have sufficient data or lacked coherence were collapsed into other larger themes. Similarly initial subthemes were also collapsed using the same approach. Subthemes which did not have sufficient data were also removed. All transcriptions were then read alongside final themes and subthemes to ensure that the TA reflected the views of professionals in the research and addressed the research questions.

Stage 5: Defining and naming the theme.

Once I was confident the thematic map represented the data, theme names were finalized based on what was deemed to capture the essence of each theme and final thematic maps were created (figure 5 in the finings chapter of this thesis). Theme tables were created and quotes for each subtheme was recorded with participants' pseudo names (table 9).

Table 9: Stage 5 of TA (Example of a Theme Table)

Theme	Subtheme	Example Quotes
The AP Panel	Purposes of the AP Panel	**John:** "but also, I think schools didn't have a close eye on what these provisions were. Were they any good, where the children were from a safeguarding point of view" **Patricia:** "we didn't know where they were, as you know, children could be missing not attending the AP, not attending school." **Grace:** "make sure that we have an oversight for making sure that we know where these children are going" **Patricia:** "children that go missing in education and to safeguard them" **Peter:** "as you were aware the money was overspent, really really over spent" **Patricia:** "money being spent where we don't know where the money is coming from" **Mary:** "let's take a look at what provision is best for them" **John:** "avoiding the scenario where we're just moving kids to offload a problem" "improving things for the student" "create a system that's beneficial for the child first" **Mary:** "people sat around the table, and you can discuss the best fit for a child" **Layla:** "the panel would discuss which was the right provision for them" **Ella:** "…we're going from 0 to 100 in one go and so that when the Panel was set up that was very much about that strategic overview so that there was a check and balance." **Mary**: "if you don't monitor it you're gonna get schools going, well we can't cope"

Stage 6: Writing up

The final stage of TA involved presenting the established themes using extracts from the data and providing an analytic commentary. To address some of the limitation highlighted by Braun and Clarke (2013) of TA, the thesis attempted to ensure that all the voices were represented within the research. Subsequently quotes from each of the 9 participants were selected within the presentation of findings. An example of themes relation to research question 1 with supporting extracts can be seen below.

Table 10: Stage 6 of TA (example extracts to support themes in relation to RQ1)

Research Question	Theme	Subtheme	Example Extracts
RQ 1: How do key professionals view the use of AP as a preventative approach to school permanent exclusion	Use of Alternative provision	Dual Placement	**Patricia** "the dual nature of placement meant that the still felt like he was part of the school and the school wanted and accepted him"
		Negative Experience	**James:** "rather than sending them to another school to experience failure. You know its that thing failed managed move, AP is the last resort."
		Entry and Exit Criteria	**John:** "would be based on what the AP can provide in terms of skills, timetable, structures and how that meets up with the child's needs."

	Alternative Provision vs Mainstream	Curriculum & Pedagogy	**Peter:** "so an opportunity to ensure that literacy and numeracy are at the standard that will enable to enter adult life and function appropriately"
		Relationships	**Sam** "he is saying that thing are much much better in AP and when I explored that with him he talked very very much about the quality of the relationships he has with staff."
		The Environment	**Grace** "I think it provides a more nurturing environment"
		The Impact	**Grace:** "AP Gave him a different perspective and more self-worth. For one I could see the confidence in her"
	The Young Person's Needs	Understanding behaviour linked to SEN	**Mary:** "you look at a child in year 10 and say why haven't you had an EHCP? Oh because primary school put it down to just being a bit naughty"
		School systems	**John** "the pastoral and SENCo routes are often quite divided. A child will be down a pastoral route and therefore potential SEN is being missed"
		Adult attitudes, attribution & perceptions of behaviour	**Ella** "schools make a judgement that that's just a badly behaved child"

		Training	**Layla** "we give them the right tools and training to make sure they can do their job properly"

Approved Off-site Learning Providers and Referral Procedures

Training Providers

Colleges

Voluntary Organisations

including those with Independent School Status

This directory is partnered with

Introduction

Welcome to LA's directory that brings together details of all approved Off-site Learning provision. By using the opportunities offered in this directory schools and other referring organisations can greatly increase choice and opportunity for pupils and provide them with personalised pathways to meet individual needs and realise their full potential. Placing pupils with providers included in this directory and implementing the procedures within ensures that pupils are placed in approved, safe provision.

This directory is partnered with the Directory of LA Schools.

Partnership working between schools and colleges, training providers and voluntary organisations produces motivated pupils who will stay in education or training or move into employment, thereby being better equipped to achieve. For the pupils themselves it is a chance to follow a curriculum that has the diversity they need delivered in a way that suits them best.

DfE Alternative Provision (Jan 2013) recommends that Local Authorities develop a local directory of 'approved' provision which meets clearly defined standards including registration where necessary, safeguarding, health & safety and quality of accommodation etc.

Prior to a placement, commissioners should assess whether the provision is suitable for pupil's individual needs, and the school should also pay attention to the number of hours the pupils are attending off-site in individual learning providers' care and be mindful that depending on the number of hours, and the status of the pupil - the provider may need to have Independent School status.

The learning provider may need to investigate pursuing Independent School status – DfE 'Registration of independent schools' – August 2019. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/865049/BRANDED_independent_school_registration_guidance_21_August_2019Ms.pdf

Everyone should also read Ofsted Alternative Provision – findings of a three-year survey – February 2016.
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-school-provision-findings-of-a-three-year-survey

The directory and procedures include:

- Off-site Vocational Provision, including a comprehensive page on each offer and off-site programmes which cover motivational, and inspirational activities targeted at those whose curriculum in school no longer

suit pupil's needs

- Considerations before referring pupils
- Referral form
- Information for pupils
- Service Level Agreement and Learning Agreement
- Safeguarding checklist for use by schools
- Copy of Health & Safety and Safeguarding Assessment
- Information on Quality Assurance visit
- A list of all approved colleges, voluntary organisations and training providers, many of whom have Independent Schools status.

Learning Providers listed in this directory receive regular Health & Safety and Safeguarding checks by Quality Assurance Panel and providers are required to complete the annual section 157 safeguarding audit for the LA Safeguarding Board.

If there is a provider that isn't listed in the directory and you would like to commission them, please contact us immediately before any arrangements are made. We can then check the provider and if approved, include them in the directory. We want to ensure that LA pupils take advantage of approved provision as their care and safety are our utmost concern.

If you have any concerns about any of the providers, please contact us immediately.

Considerations before referring pupils

Have the parents/carers been actively involved in the process?

It is vital that parents/carers fully understand the implications of the curriculum route chosen and that they support it. They should also have an understanding of the wider issues such as transport, supervision and the different environment the learners will be attending. Does the pupil have the level of maturity and independence needed to thrive in a different setting?

Does the pupil have an understanding of the programme area in which they are interested?

Pupils should be able to demonstrate that the curriculum area they have chosen really fits in well with their career aspirations, if they have them. Alternatively, these opportunities will give them employability skills which are essential for any career option in the future.

Pupils should also have an understanding of what progression routes the programme will give them. In particular that studying at a college or provider does not give them automatic preference for apprenticeship places when they chose to leave school.

Can the pupil demonstrate commitment in terms of attendance, behaviour and punctuality?

It is important to remember that if a pupil has particular needs then they should be directed to provision that meet those needs. It is not fair on the pupil to enrol them on an unsuitable programme and set them up to fail.

Assessment Arrangements

This is important because for many pupils the practical nature of vocational assessment will be attractive to them. Highlighting that in some cases a pupil will be assessed by showing they can actually do a particular task rather than reporting on it theoretically will help the learner chose qualifications that are suited to them. Alternately, it is just as important to stress the amount of theory needed in programmes that some might think are purely practical.

Request for Alternative Provision Panel Support

Please complete as much of this form as you are able to and forward along with any accompanying evidence to lorraine_nickless@LA.gov.uk .Completed forms will be tabled at the next Alternative Provision Panel (APP). Referrers will be advised of the date once ALL paperwork has been received.

If you leave any sections blank or provide misleading information this will delay the processing of your form. Please make every attempt to provide as much information as possible.
THIS SHOULD ONLY BE USED IF YOU ARE REQUESTING FUNDING SUPPORT FROM THE LA

Pupil's Details:			
Name:	**Date of Birth:**	**Year Group:** Year Group	**Current educational setting:** Select school from list
Address:	**Post Code:**		
Parental <u>Preference</u> for new placement (please note places may not be available in preferred settings): 1) 2) 3)			
Supportive additional Information (including safeguarding information and details of all external agencies involved in last 12 months):			

Seabreeze Involvement (Please check all that apply)			
ECP	☐	CCAT	☐
SAT – SEMH	☐	Sensory Support	☐
SAT – Learning	☐		

Previous schools or education settings with dates including Managed Transitions and short-term placements at Alternative Provisions:			
Name	Start Date	End Date	Reason why placement ended?

SEN Information

Status (Please check)	N/A ☐	EHCP ☐

Area of Need:

Provision in Place:

Area of Need:

Provision in Place:

Area of Need:

Provision in Place:

Attendance Include figures for the last academic year if presenting prior to Spring Half Term.

2019 / 2020		%
2018 / 2019		%
2017 / 2018		%

Additional Attendance Information:

What's Working well?

Pupil's Views:

Hobbies & Interests:

Friendships – who might the pupil know at this school? (Consider positive and negative influences)

School subjects liked/disliked?

Who else is at home?

Any health issues we need to be aware of?

Additional documents to be provided to support the application:

Academic data	☐
Attendance print out	☐
Behaviour log (positive and nega-tive)	☐
Interventions map	☐
Personal data sheet	☐
Risk Assessment	☐

Why do you feel a placement in an Alternative Provision will benefit the young person?

Parents views:

Parent Signature:	
	⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯
Date brought to Panel:	
Panel Decision:	
Panel to fund:	
School to fund:	
Other:	

Example Service Level Agreement

Service Level Agreement between and the LA Local Authority

Service Level Agreement between LA Metropolitan Borough Council and Y [Partner] in relation

Purpose:

- To ensure that there is a contract for all learners placed by LA Local Authority in alternative provisions and independent schools
- To ensure quality of education provided to learners so that high expectations for attainment and achievement of qualifications are maintained and pupils are prepared for adult life
- To ensure high standards of safeguarding are maintained so that the learners stay safe and are healthy
- To ensure that if the pupil has special educational needs they receive the appropriate differentiated curriculum, support and services needed so that they meet expected outcomes
- To provide clarity over funding arrangements between the provider and LA Local Authority.

Scope

The scope of this Service Level Agreement will apply to any learner placed at **Y** by LA Local Authority during the stated time period.

This Service Level Agreement will be supplemented with individual Student Placement Agreements for all pupils that details the agreed qualification pathway and further support required for the pupil to succeed in meeting academic, social and health outcomes. This will include outcomes for learners with Education, Health and Care Plans, individual provision plans (SEN Support), PEP (for Looked after children), Health Plans (for learners with medical needs).

Any pre-existing Student Placement Agreements / Schedules will transfer onto this contract at the earliest opportunity.

Period of Service Level Agreement

The Service Level Agreement is effective from September 20.. and will continue until termination by either party in accordance to the termination agreement (below) and supercedes any pervious Service Level Agreement or contract with LA Local Authority

Breach of Service Level Agreement and Conditions for Termination

The Service Level Agreement may be terminated forthwith-

- By either party on written notice if the other party is in serious breach of the terms of the Service Level Agreement.
- By either party in the event of a breach capable of being remedied, if the other Party fails to remedy the breach within 28 days of receipt of a written notice to remedy the same.
- Either party may terminate the service level agreement forthwith on written notice if the other party shall become bankrupt or make an arrangement with it's creditors or enter into winding up proceedings.
- Termination of the service level agreement shall not prejudice the rights of either party or any learner which has arisen on or before the date of termination.

Activities and Services to be provided by Y

In providing education for pupils who live in LA, **[Y]** will

- Provide a structured programme of learning, with clear aims, objectives and methods, leading to a nationally recognised qualification
- Provide additional learning / pastoral support for learners who require it
- Provide specific evidence-based intervention programmes / strategies for pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities
- Provide the learners and their parents / guardians, as well as LA LA with all relevant programme details, i.e., term dates, whom to contact, timetables etc
- Provide all tools, equipment and materials required to complete the programme of learning
- Provide a set of personal safety equipment required for all practical work where necessary and provide training in its use
- Provide a thorough induction programme, to include health and safety, at the start of the programme
- Carry out risk assessments on all aspects of programmes prior to the commencement of the programme
- Provide a clear process for the reporting of accidents
- Keep all young learners' details in accordance with the GDPR.
- Employ staff with relevant teaching and vocational experience and ensure that staff have a current DBS

- Collect and supply the necessary data for LA monitoring requirements
- Adhere to national and local guidance in regards to keeping the children safe / safeguarding
- Contact the LA immediately regarding any young learner whose behaviour or progress is causing concern
- Where students are to be unsupervised, parents / guardians will be informed and their consent obtained
- Provide an identified person to be available for support
- Monitor progress and provide termly written reports to be forwarded to the parent / guardian. Discuss the reports with the young learner at the end of each term.
- Record individual attendance and provide ½ termly reports to the LA
- Ensure adherence to LA referral processes regarding non-attendance and removal from roll.
- Ensure adherence to pupil registration regulations
- Ensure that all accreditation costs are met
- Comply with LA's centrally agreed drugs, bullying and disciplinary policies
- Comply with LA trips and visits guidelines and ensure that all necessary documentation is completed
- Ensure that child protection regulations are adhered to and all staff working with pupils are DBS checked
- Ensure moderation and quality assurance systems are robust and meet any external requirements
- Ensure that staff receive appropriate training where necessary in order
- Hold at least one open / parents' / school evening a year
- Provide work placements for young learners where appropriate and agreed, ensuring that they meet all legal standards and health and safety requirements
- Provide a free meal where required
- Provide a clear post-16 progression route in education, training or employment with training
- Ensure that injury or loss insurance covers young learners under the age of 16
- Invoice the LA for the agreed amount on a half termly basis
- Attend regular progress meetings with the LA to monitor all provider programmes

In placing pupils with [Y], *they* will

- Nominate an appropriate member of staff to act as the key contact and co-ordinator
- Carry out a risk assessment of young learners it nominates for a programme
- Interview prospective young learners with their parents and obtain written permission from parent for them to be taken onto the course
- Provide in writing, prior to the commencement of the programme place, relevant detailed reports on the participant's circumstances, behaviour and educational status.

- Provide an emergency contact number and information on any known medical condition including individual health plan where necessary
- For young learners who special educational needs, provide information about these needs including where appropriate: SEN Support plans from previous school, Education, Health and Care Plan, reports from external professionals working with the pupil including most current assessment and advice
- Notify programme co-ordinator of any significant change or circumstances involving the young learners or details likely to effect programme delivery
- Support the providers with concerns. Take responsibility for the following up of non-attendees after notification of absence and provide support if other problems occur
- Assist the provider with carrying out the previously agreed disciplinary procedures and behaviour polices
- Arrange, co-ordinate and finance transport to and from the provider where appropriate under the LA's Travel Assistance policy
- Remind the parents / guardians that travelling to and from the provider placement remains their responsibility
- Attend all open evenings held by the providers
- Ensure that all providers have the necessary health and safety arrangements in place
- Settle invoices for the agreed payment within the provider's specified time
- Attend regular progress meetings to monitor all programmes.

In addition, the LA will

- Require that all provision meets legal and any additional requirements as specified in the Service Level Agreement, including health and safety requirements
- Require that provision meets legal requirements.

Payment Arrangements

LA LA pay for the statutory education of learners aged between Year 7 to Year 11 at the following rates:

- A daily rate of £XXX per pupil for a maximum of 195 days per year
- A daily rate of £XXX per pupil who are entitled to free school meals for a maximum of 195 days per year.

- Y will be entitled to claim in respect of a learner payment from the date of his or her admission.
- Y will render an invoice for payment in arrears on a half termly basis naming individual learners, time period (start and end date), number of days, amount per pupil and total payment to be paid and placing officer from the local authority (please see appendix 1 for an invoicing template)

- The Local Authority will pay correctly submitted invoices within 30 days of receipt unless the Authority, acting reasonably, is not satisfied with the details shown in the invoice are correct or that the service provided has not be in accordance with the Service Level Agreement.

- The Local Authority will not pay additional monies for revision / study classes outside of school hours, trips or educational visits, gym membership, specific intervention programmes or support for pupils without Education, Health and Care Plans as these should be inclusive within the curriculum offer of the education provider.

- Provision for learners who have Special Educational Needs and an Education, Health and Care Plan will be agreed before admission and documented on their EHCP. Any changes to funded support will be discussed at the pupil's Annual Review of their Education, Health and Care plan with student, parents and SEN Caseworker. Decisions to allocate additional funding will be made by the Provision and Placement panel within the Local Authority

The Authority shall not be liable to meet the Fees in the following circumstances:

- When a learner has been permanently excluded. The authority's liability will cease on the day that the exclusion is confirmed in accordance with any arrangements for appeals and the learner is taken off roll.
- When the learner leaves school or is removed from roll in accordance to the pupil registration regulations and LA referral processes
- When the learner completes statutory school education

Monitoring & Evaluation
- Y will agree to be part the peer review cycle of quality assuring provision with schools and LA officers. This requires the provider to complete a self-assessment of their provision including strengths and areas for development and allow the peer review team to complete a visit to site – observing practice and looking at key evidence in support of developments identified.

- Y will provide the following data to the LA for each learner
  - Attendance (half termly)

  - Yearly progress report towards identified qualification and outcomes

  - End of Key Stage attainment data

  - Destination data for learners due to enter post 16 providers

  - Progress towards end of key stage outcomes for learners with Education, Health and Care Plans.

Accountability

LA LA continues to be accountable for the education of individual pupils placed at **Y, as such Y** will provide information to enable LA LA to fulfil their overall responsibility for the planning of education of pupils in settings outside maintained schools.

Review of SLA
This service level agreement will be reviewed every *12* months and amended as appropriate.

Signed on Behalf of Y [Partner]

Signed on behalf of X

[Insert date]

APPENDIX F: ADMISSION OF PUPILS TO ALTERNATIVE PROVISION-

CHECKLIST OF INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN AN INITIAL REFERRAL FORM

- **Personal Details**

    – Young person's name (including preferred term of address)
    – Date of birth
    – Gender and ethnicity (using standard ethnicity codes)
    – School year
    – Contact address, telephone number(s) and e-mail address(es)
    – Emergency telephone number(s)
    – Name of parent or carer
    – Any local identifying number (e.g. Connexions Profile number or Education UPN number)
    – If the young person has SEN Support, EHC Plan, Health Care Plan, or has identified special needs.

- **Referral Details** –
    – Name of the referring agency (e.g., School, Connexions Service, Education Welfare, Youth Offending Team)
    – Name of link person (e.g. Connexions personal Adviser)
    – Address of referring agency, telephone number and e-mail address.

- **School Details**
    – Name and location of the last school attended
    – Last date of attendance

- **Educational Status**
    - The reason why the young person is not at school
    - Formal date of exclusion from school (if the young person has been permanently excluded or excluded for 15 days or more)
    - Date the referral was received (if the young person is new to district)
    - The date of removal from last school attended with reason for removal from roll (if the young person is not on the roll of a school for any other reason)
    - Name of medical consultant or other medical personnel (if the pupil is unable to attend school for medical reasons)

- **Educational Information**
    - Information about prior attainment, interests and aspirations
    - SATS results (if available) from school
    - Attendance record.

- **Status**
    - Whether the young person falls into a vulnerable group (e.g.: looked after children, children unable to attend school because of medical

needs, Gypsy/Traveller children, children of asylum seekers young carers, school refusers, teenage parents and young offenders)

- **Other Agency Involvement**
    - Name, contact person (name and role) and telephone number of any other agency, both statutory and voluntary, involved with the young person (e.g.: Social Services, YOT, Connexions PA, Teenage Pregnancy Coordinators)

- **Medical Information**
    - Medical information which might impact on the placement, for example: allergies, asthma, or regularly taken medication.

- **Reasons for Referral**
    - Reasons for referral (detailed and specific)
    - Whether these have been discussed with the young person prior to completion of the form (and their views)

- **Parental Involvement**
    - Referral forms should indicate what discussions have been held with parents/carers and their views

- **Long Term Plans**
    - Information about the long term educational and career plans of the young person (e.g.: what the young person is planning to do when leaving school, the qualifications the young person is intending to obtain or the type of career the young person is wishing to pursue)

- **Risk Assessment**
    - Any knowledge of risk or factors likely to impact on a placement
    - Any measures identified to mitigate risk

- **Additional Information**
    - Any additional information that may be relevant, such as family details, social emotional and behavioural factors and personal health.

- **Recommendations**
    - If an LEA operates a placement panel, the form may need to include a section which identifies the outcome of any Panel consideration.

- **Placement**

Dates

- Of referral for placement
- Of consideration by placement panel or similar
- Of placement
- Target date for reintegration or follow-up review

APPENDIX G: A FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE OF ALTERNATIVE PROVISION BY EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

1. Achievements and Standards:

- What baseline data do you hold on pupils / students?

- What data do you hold on pupil / student progress?

- (For pupils in care) Who do you liaise with in the local authority to provide them with information of attendance and progress?

- How is "value-added" measured?

- Does the data you collect include details of:

    - Prior achievement
    - Gender
    - Ethnicity
    - SEN / gifted and talented status
    - Attendance
    - Punctuality
    - Retention rates
    - Destinations
    - Overall trends

- How are individual targets / learning goals set and tracked over time?

- How do you promote students' personal learning skills?

- How are students prepared for work or further study?

2. Quality of Education and Training

- What qualifications and experience do teaching / support staff hold?

- Have child protection checks been completed for all staff?

- What induction programmes are offered for staff and students?

- How do you match staff expertise to student need?

- How are learning programmes planned?

- Do the programmes meet minimum requirements for time allocations (FTE)?

- How are programmes matched to student need, potential and interests?

- What range of qualifications can students take?

- What training do you provide for teaching and support staff?

- What time do teaching / support staff have for planning and assessment?

- How is student work assessed and monitored?

- What resources are available to staff and students?

- How are these resources managed?

- Is the accommodation suitable and adequate?

- How are good working relationships promoted between staff and students?

- How is the development of key skills incorporated into learning programmes?

- Are all health and safety requirements in place?

- How is health and safety monitored and reviewed?

3. **Leadership and Management**

- How are staff roles and responsibilities organised?

- What policies are currently in place? (Please provide copies)

- What development plans are in place?

- How are these plans monitored and reviewed?

- What quality assurance systems do you operate?

- How do you ensure equal access to learning and equality of opportunity?

- What financial systems are in place?

- How is value for money monitored and evaluated?

- What internal communication systems do you operate?

- What is the level of liaison with the student's family and other organisations?

- What student guidance systems are in place?

- How are student's wider needs supported:

  - Financial?

  - Careers guidance?

  - Personal needs?

  - Medical needs?

  - Child Protection?

- What arrangements are in place to fulfil legal requirements in respect of:

  - Race Relations (Amendment) Act

  - SEN and Disability Discrimination Act 2001

  - National and local guidelines on trips and visits

  - Health and safety

  - Insurance

Safeguarding checklist for Schools

These practices protect you, the pupil and the provider and ensure that the pupil has a positive learning experience in a safe environment

Is the following available in your School?

A complete list of ALL pupils who are engaged in "Off Site Learning" including those who have chosen a subject delivered off site at options time and those who have been referred as an alternative to their curriculum, detailing the following:
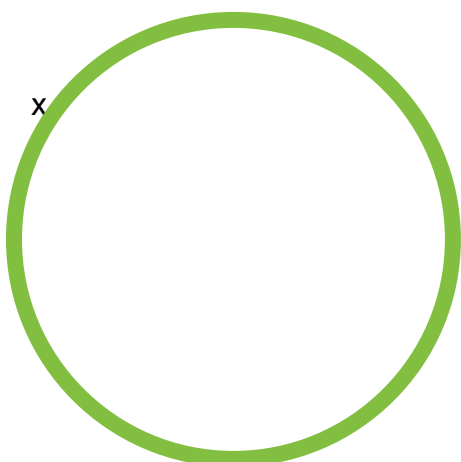
- Pupils name?
- Staff member responsible for referring pupil and monitoring their progress?
- Learning Provider, they are attending?
- How do they travel to and from Learning Provider?
- Hours of attendance – day, hours, duration – please ensure that the pupil is receiving their full educational entitlement, and where they are placed with more than one provider, that each provider is aware where the pupil receives the balance of their educational entitlement
- Course being followed?
- Contact details of the Learning Providers/pupils/parents/carers readily available in case of an emergency
- What systems have you in place to check attendance daily?
- How are parents/carers informed of absences?
- Progress on this course – how often is this checked, how and who by?
- Pupils will be involved in a variety of different activities to those they are used to in school. How are parents/carers informed about the types of activities pupils will be involved in and the risks attached, plus the control measures implemented to minimise these risks?
- How do you inform providers of pupil's special needs or changes in circumstances after the initial referral?
- Does the Learning Provider have easy access to a member of staff in case of an emergency? (some schools have answering machine systems that make contacting school very difficult)
- Do you have Service Level Agreements with each Provider you contract with?
- Do you have a Learning Agreement for every pupil?

Most schools have a dedicated member of staff responsible for pupils on off-site learning.

- Who else has access to this information?
- What arrangements are there when this person is absent?
- Who checks the Learning Providers in terms of Health, Safety and Safeguarding?
- If there are any issues around quality of provision or safeguarding, who do you contact?

List of Providers

Click the provider to be taken to their Ofsted Report – (external link)

Independent Schools		
Name	**Contact Number**	**Email Address**
xxx	xxxx	xxxx
xxxx	xxxx	xxxx
xxxx	xxxx	xxxx
xxxx	xxxx	xxxx
xxxx	xxxx	xxxx
xxxx	xxxx	xxxx
xxxx	xxxx	xxxx
xxxx l	xxxx	xxxx

Other Alternative Providers (non-registered) *		
Name	**Contact Number**	**Email Address**
xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx

Non-Registered are providers who are not registered as an independent school and cannot offer more than 18 hours of education per week

Colleges		
Name	**Contact Number**	**Email Address**
xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx

Complimentary Services		
Name	**Contact Number**	**Email Address**
xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx
xxx	xxx	xxx

The xx Foundation

CONTACT INFORMATION:

xxxx

x

Our KS3 offer gives pupils the opportunity to have 'Time – Out' from their mainstream school. Often at risk of exclusion or in need of an alternative learning environment, young people are referred for a maximum of 3 months before a review meeting to discuss their placement. A varied programme is delivered that aims to re-integrate young people back into mainstream school, providing a flexible provision in response to individual young people's needs. Young people take part in lessons such as English, Maths, PSHE, Art, Citizenship, Science, and Media. Many of the lessons focus on positive changes in behaviour and attitude while preparing young people's return to mainstream education.

Our KS2 strategy focuses on helping to reduce primary exclusions. Our out of school provision, which allowed schools the opportunity to refer pupils who are at greatest risk of exclusion sometime out of their school for up to three days a week and undertake a programme that will work towards successfully reintegrating them back into mainstream education, controlling their behaviour in a mature manner. Pupils take part in lessons such as English, Maths, Sport and Art.
Lunch is provided for all pupils who are referred

Monday – Friday 9.30-2.30pm (KS3)
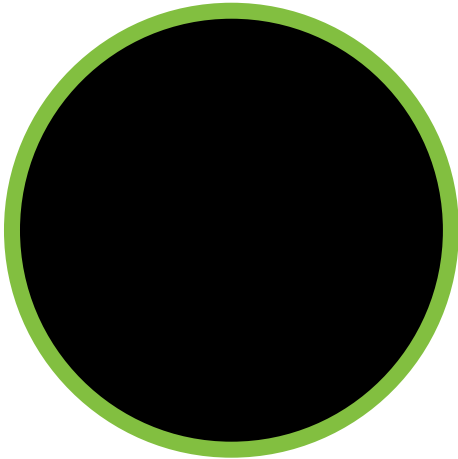KS3 pupils can only be referred for a max of 3 days per week plus a day offsite at Xxx
Monday – Friday 9.30-2.00pm (KS2)
KS2 pupils can only be referred for a max of 2 days per week
£65 per pupil per day
No Transport Provided for KS3 pupils however we have a transport provider for KS2 who deal directly with the referring school

xxx Academy

CONTACT INFORMATION:

xxx

Understanding the challenges of both hair and education industries, a group of passionate and experienced teachers have given life to xxx Academy having a different approach in the alternative provisional arena. Our team has over 25 years of experience within teaching, hairdressing and beauty. Our teachers have mastered their craft in some of the biggest salons and training academies in the country. As a result, the expectation level from themselves and their students is high leading to exemplary results.

What we do

The Level 1 training in hair and beauty aims is to enable our learners to develop hair and beauty skills, techniques and knowledge. Learners will have the opportunity to select from a range of technical optional units including: hand and nail care, foot and toenail care, make-up application, skin care, nail art, face painting, blow-drying hair, winding skills, shampooing and conditioning hair, plaiting hair, colouring hair using temporary colour. All qualifications at this level have been designed to further develop knowledge of the hair and beauty sector and use this as a basis for further learning, as a full time or part time learner.

Our Level 2 qualifications are intended to support our students to develop a broad and comprehensive understanding of the hair and beauty sector, adding more knowledge which spans the entire vocational sector and related industries. Through undertaking this level learners will also develop a range of transferable skills including communication skills, use of initiative, planning and researching skills, self-management, self-motivation and the ability to work independently. In addition to these transferable skills, students will learn planning and marketing skills, using technology by responding to design briefs. General skills that can be applied to a vast range of topics and will prepare learners to progress to further learning in a broad range of subject areas.

How we do it

We believe that one size does not fit all, so in the first instance our team will understand the individual: needs, wants, likes and dislikes in order to recommend a qualification at the appropriate level. All our qualifications are designed to cater to all ages starting at the early age of 14.

Our teaching method is dynamic as we have a continuous improvement way of working where we encourage students, team members, suppliers to provide constructive criticism and coupled with lesson learnt we constantly improve. Through structured training, the latest equipment and technologies with up to date training methods we ensure our learners receive industry-leading training. Similarly, to our teaching our prices are also tailored to provide packages that are fit for purpose. Quotes available upon request. Our establishment is a half-way house between a traditional classroom environment and a client facing commercial space. We are all about the quality and safety!

As a result, our premise is secure and cosy accommodating only small number of students per day.

xxxx School

CONTACT INFORMATION:

xxx
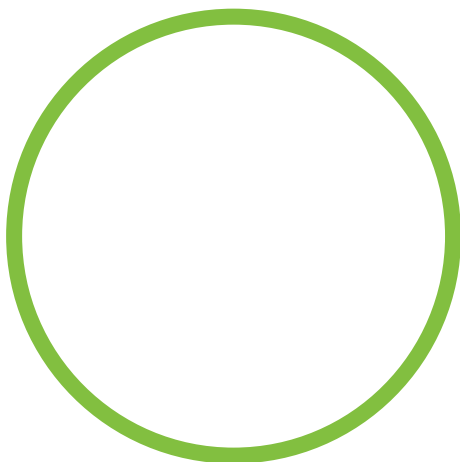
WHAT YOU OFFER:

INCLUDE

WHAT COURSES / SUBJECTS
(please see list of courses on offer on attached page)

DAYS AND TIMES
Monday to Friday 9.30 am – 3.15pm
Full time and part time places available

COSTS £70 per day

IF TRANSPORT INCLUDED
A weekly or monthly bus pass will be provided for students who live further than 3 miles from BCW School. This is subject to parents completing a Scholar's Bus Pass Application form and submission to the local authority.

Functional Skills
English –Level 1, Level 2 depending on ability
Maths - Level 1, Level 2 depending on ability
ICT - Level 1, Level 2 depending on ability

Asdan Short Courses
PHSE
Citizenship
History
Geography
Foodwise
Beliefs and Values
Sex and Relationships
Land Based Science and Enterprise
Careers and Work Experience (Year 11)

Vocational Courses
IMI Level 1 Certificate in Transport Maintenance
IMI Level 1 Award in Transport Maintenance
BTec Level 1 Certificate in Construction
BTec Level 1 Diploma in Art and Design
Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award (Year 10)
Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award (Year 11)

Courses for Students with EHCP or Moderate Learning Difficulties

Functional Skills

English –Level 1, Level 2 depending on ability

Maths - Level 1, Level 2 depending on ability

ICT - Level 1, Level 2 depending on ability

Asdan Short Courses

PHSE

Citizenship

History

Geography

Foodwise

Beliefs and Values

XXX Academy

CONTACT INFORMATION:

xxx
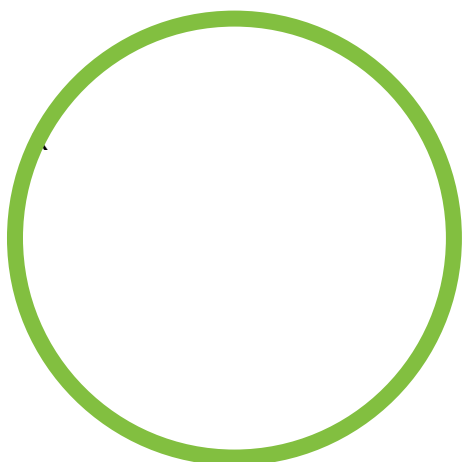
WHAT COURSES / SUBJECTS

GCSE – Maths / English Language / English Literature / History / Geography / R.S. / Biology / Chemistry / Physics

FUNCTIONAL SKILLS – Maths / English / SDP
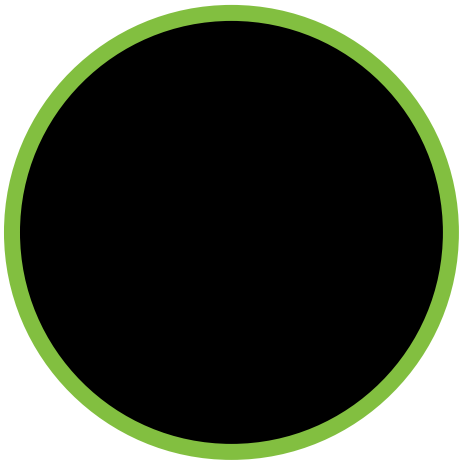
DAYS AND TIMES
Mon-Fri – 9-3

COSTS
£60 pd minimum.

Free School Meals £2.50

(SEN cost upon request)

IF TRANSPORT INCLUDED

Optional cost

xxx Training

We offer a range of music, multimedia & work based learning programmes including:

- Music Technology
- DJ Workshops
- Recording Studio Skills
- YouTube Academy
- Games Design
- 3D Design
- Film & Video Production
- Graphic Design
- Photography
- Web Design
- Animation
- Welcome Host – Customer service
- Business & Enterprise
- Access to Work

All our courses have associated industry recognised, vocational qualifications from Entry Level to Level 3.
DAYS AND TIMES: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 09.00 – 2.30.

One to one sessions & bespoke packages are available. Call or email for further information.

COSTS : Available on request.

Xxx Ltd
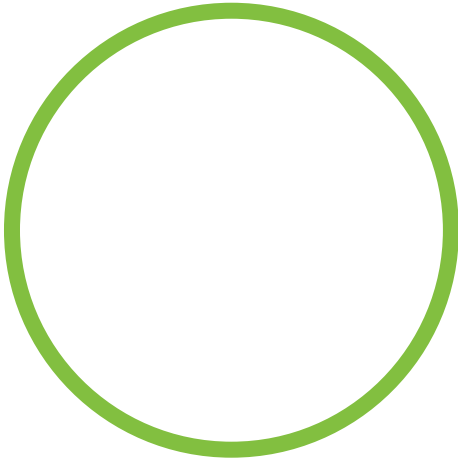
Courses:
Motor Vehicle:
IMI Level 1: Service & Maintenance Engineering
OCN Level 1: Motor Vehicle Skills

Landscaping/Construction:
OCN Level 2: Development Skills in Landscaping
OCN Level 1: Practical Horticulture Skills
OCN Entry Level 3: Development Skills In Horticulture

Childcare
Cache/ncfe: Level 2 Caring for Children & Young People
Cache/ncfe: Level 1: Childcare
Cache/ncfe: Entry Level 3 Childcare

New for September 2019:
Ncfe/Cache: Level 1 Health & Social Care

Hours of work: 9.30am to 1.30pm – 4 hours per day, up to 3 days per week only.

Transport Service is offered on a need basis and places are limited. (discussed on enquiries)

Envirohort work with a number of Schools & Centres delivering Qualifications to 14 – 16 year olds who are at risk or have been excluded from mainstream school, students with a range of special needs & requirements, students within the justice system and students requiring work related learning.

Costs: Start at £ 57.50 to £ 75.00 per student per day, depending on student need.
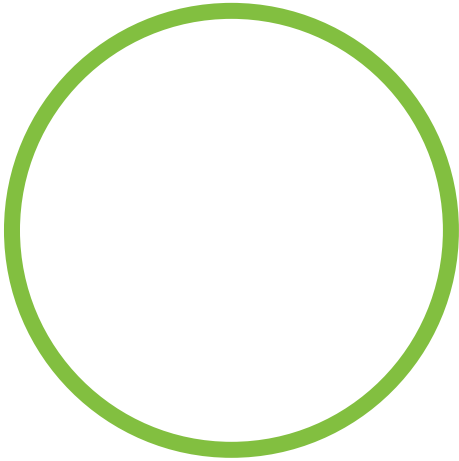   Lunch at £ 2.50 per student per day
    PPE at £ 25.00 per student for Motor Vehicle
    & Landscaping/Construction.
One off charge for Certification and Registration depending on the Awarding Body.

XXX strive to tailor our service to meet the requirements of the student, so please contact us for further information.

Xxx Independent School
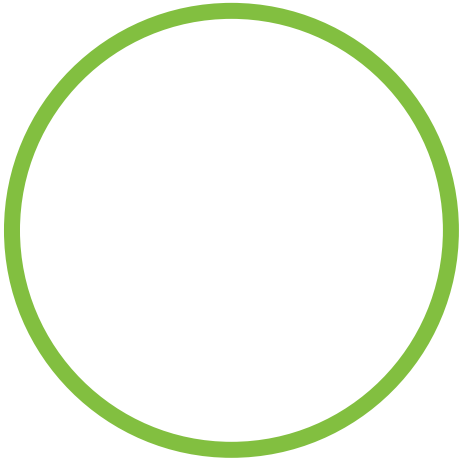
CONTACT INFORMATION:

xxx

WHAT YOU OFFER:

Offer:
- GCSEs in English Language, English Literature, Maths, Biology, History, PE and Art.
- BTEC Health and Social Care
- AQA Units in Music
- Key Stage Three Preventative Programme
- Key stage Three Long Term Programme
- Environmental Programme

Costs:
- £65.00 per day
- £80.00 per day for learners with an EHCP
- Transport is included in costs.
- Times
- KS4 9.25am – 3.00pm (Mon- Thurs)
- KS4 9.25 am – 12.30 (Fri)

XXX

CONTACT INFORMATION:

xxx

WHAT YOU OFFER:

Outdoor Education through – Canoeing/Kayaking/Climbing/Abseiling/ArcheryM-Biking/Hill Walking and camping experiences

DAYS AND TIMES

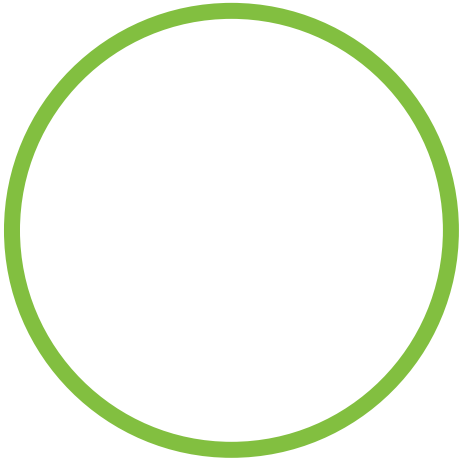Days and times to be booked by contacting the centre

COSTS

Prices are based on £2.68 per person per hour

IF TRANSPORT INCLUDED

Transport can be used at an additional cost and by contacting the centre

XXX

CONTACT INFORMATION:

xxx

WHAT YOU OFFER:

All of the following can be on Xxx premises or on your site. We do not provide transport.

One to one mentoring at Xxx premises or offsite/in school/community setting for those aged 9-19 years

Alternative education provision – Yrs 5-11; max 6 hrs per week per student; accreditation available - OCN West Midlands EL3/L1. Focus on SEND, Emotional Health and Being, independent living, next steps in EET and preventing violence and exploitation

Group Workshops on topical issues such as: online safety, confidence building, understanding our difficult feelings, and healthy relationships, low mood and anxiety

Youth club – Thursday evening at St James Church, Lion Farm (see website)

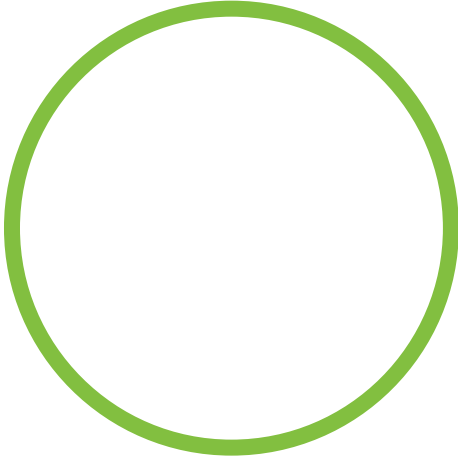DAYS AND TIMES – Monday- Thursday all day, Friday till 1pm

COSTS :
Group £65 per student, per day (5 hours)
One to one – bespoke but average £580 for 10 X 1 hour sessions

Xxx Foundation

CONTACT INFORMATION:

xxx

Certified Functional Skills at Entry Levels, Level 1 & Level 2:
- English
- Maths
- ICT

Certified BTEC & Diploma options:
- ICT Systems & Principles – Level 2
- Level 2 BTEC Diploma in Professional Competence of IT & Telecoms Professionals (equivalent to 3 GCSEs)
- Level 2 Certificate in IT Users (equivalent to 1 GCSE)
- Level 2 Certificate in Business Administration (equivalent
- Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Customer Service (equivalent to 1 GCSE)

Apprenticeships:
- Apprenticeship in Professional Competence for IT, Web & Telecoms Professionals (Intermediate, Advanced & Higher)
- Advanced Apprenticeship in Social Media & Digital Marketing

Digital Media Courses:
- Virtual Reality Taster
- Social Media Taster
- Robotics Taster
- Game Development Taster
- Short Film Taster
- Graphic Design Programme
- Intro to Website Design
- Intro to Graphic Design
- Intro to Games Design
- Unity Coding – Beginner
- Unity Coding – Intermediate
- Unity Coding – Advanced – First Person Games
- Unity Coding Advanced - Virtual Reality
- Unity Coding Advanced - Augmented Reality

Pre-Employability Certified Course
WEX

DAYS AND TIMES   Rolling & to suit participant

COSTS   Please enquire via email/telephone
IF TRANSPORT INCLUDED   Can explore upon enquiry
XXX
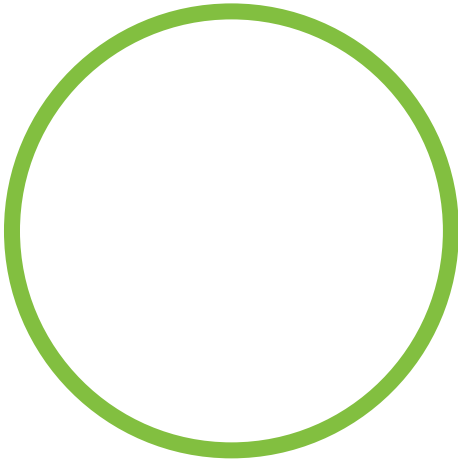
CONTACT INFORMATION:

xxx

WHAT YOU OFFER:

- Leadership Management
- Payroll
- Internal Audit
- Business Administration
- Customer Service
- Events Assistant
- Management Consultant

DAYS AND TIMES – flexible

COSTS – Usually Levy Funded

IF TRANSPORT INCLUDED – None

Xxx Education

CONTACT INFORMATION:
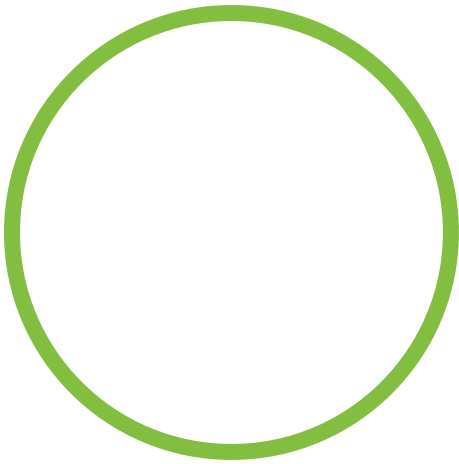
xxxx

Xxx offer a holistic learning approach to young people who would benefit from a smaller learning environment and whereby mainstream education hasn't previously worked for them. An NOCN qualification can be built to create a bespoke package around the young person's needs and interests.

We offer:

- Painting and Decorating
- Childcare
- Motor Vehicle
- Personal and Social Development
- Employability
- Maths and English Functional Skills (Entry to level 2)
- Maths and English GCSE
- Work placements
- *NOCN or City and Guilds accredited

We also make full use of our catering area to enhance life skills which could also lead to level 2 Food and Hygiene.

Costs - £70 per day

Bus pass/day savers can be provided onsite (reimbursed to us by referrer)

Xxx Training
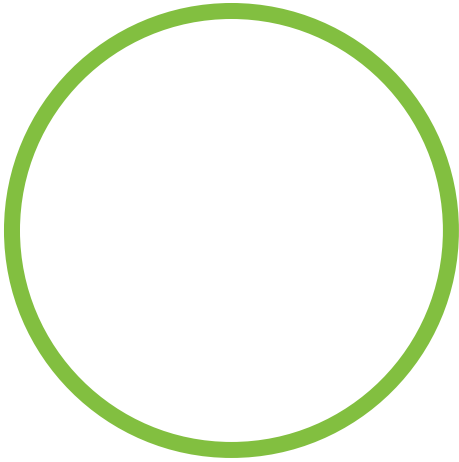
CONTACT INFORMATION:

xxx

WHAT YOU OFFER:

- L1 City & Guilds Construction/E3 City & Guilds Motor Vehicle & Functional skills
- Maths English & ICT awarding body is City & Guilds
- Entry 1 up to Level 2

DAYS AND TIMES 9am – 3.30pm 5 days a week

COSTS awaiting - September's costings

IF TRANSPORT INCLUDED - NO

Xxx Training

CONTACT INFORMATION:

xxx
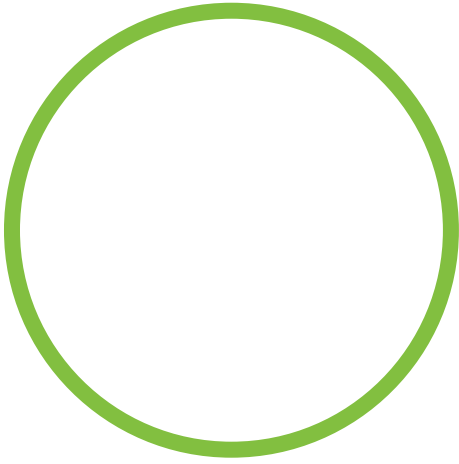
WHAT YOU OFFER:

INCLUDE

WHAT COURSES / SUBJECTS

- Maths/English/ICT at Functional Skills up to Level 2 and GCSE for students with the appropriate prior attainment.
- Motor Vehicle, Construction Multi Trades qual,
- Business Admin, Cus Services, Hospitality & Retail

DAYS AND TIMES
Mon-Thurs 9.00-3.30pm

COSTS
See Attached

IF TRANSPORT INCLUDED For some courses
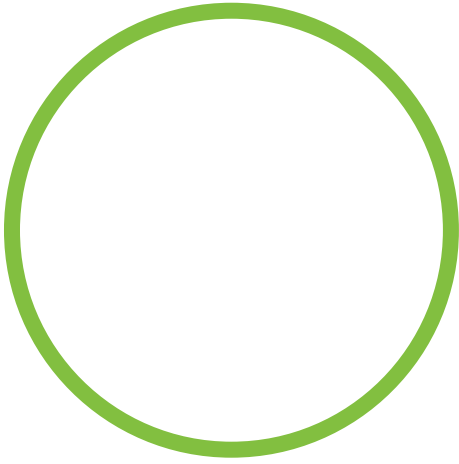
CONTACT INFORMATION:

xxx

Service for school prospectus

Xxxx have been providing high quality training to companies throughout the Midlands for over forty years. We have a strong track record of working with employers across a range of industries and were graded as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted for our partnership engagement.

PTP has extensive experience of working with schools to deliver programmes and specialised sessions within Key Stage 4 and at Post 16.

Roles operated within the company

Search and Select Apprenticeship recruitment team- Business Administration
Overview of PTP Training and Job roles within Search & Select department

- Recruitment

- Business Development

- Administration

Review Apprenticeship website with application and screening processes.

- Recruit an apprentice

- Interviews

- processes

Max 3 students 4-6 hrs, I day.
No cost
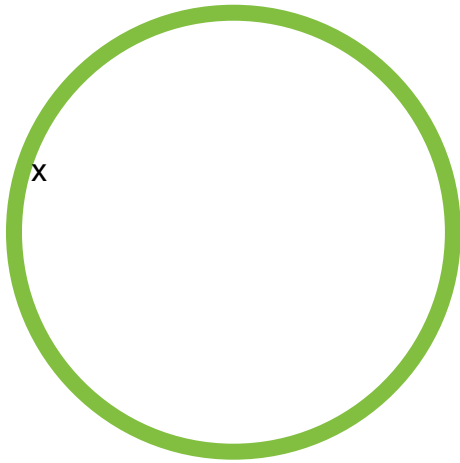
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PTP has extensive experience of working with schools to deliver programmes and specialised sessions within Key Stage 4 and at Post 16.

Roles operated within the company

Engineering Experience Day

Working with experienced and qualified engineers you will develop a range of skills enabling you to experience;

- Understanding materials
- Using equipment to mark out and measure
- Using hand tools to shape material
- Using machinery to accurately drill components

Have a great experience, take home and show off your new skills through your completed project.

Cost: £125 per learner.

XXX School
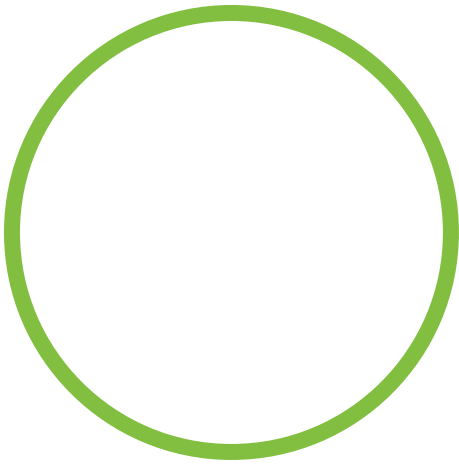
xxx

WHAT YOU OFFER:

Curriculum Offer

GCSEs
Maths
Statistics
English
Sciences (triple/double)
Geography
Religious Education
Citizenship
Modern foreign languages

Functional Skills
Maths, English, ICT

Awards/Units
Beauty
Art
Ucan programme (SEN)
Geography
Science
RE

Non accredited
Personal, Health and social education, Sports

Transport:
Pick up and drop off points for children from Smethwick and Oldbury

<u>Days and Times:</u>
Monday to Friday
9am-3pm

XXX
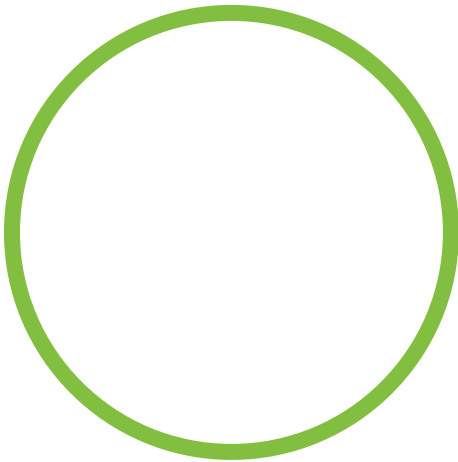
CONTACT INFORMATION:

xxxx

xxx, is a company who believes strongly in providing a good foundation for young people to help them go onto build themselves good future careers.

We achieve this by providing professional quality training and tuition given by accredited Assessors, in a friendly environment for your pupils to achieve their best results.

We offer alternative provision for schools / LEA or pupil referral unit.
WHAT COURSES / SUBJECTS

Qualification
Edexcel BTEC Entry Level 3 Award in Construction (QCF) 500/6054/5
Edexcel BTEC Level 1 Award in Construction (QCF) 500/6600/6
Edexcel BTEC Level 1 Certificate in Construction (QCF) 500/6591/9
Edexcel BTEC Level 1 Diploma in Construction (QCF) 500/6668/7
Pearson BTEC Level 1 Award in Health and Safety in a Construction Environment (601/1861/1)

Startright is now delivering the above qualification for those people who wish to attain their CSCS Green card. Your student will learn various practical construction skills i.e: Carpentry, Bricklaying, Painting & Decorating, Decorating Household Goods, also some tiling and plastering etc.

DAYS AND TIMES:
Mon to Fri 9am - 2pm

COSTS: £69 per place per day

IF TRANSPORT INCLUDED: Students make their own way into Startright.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

xxx
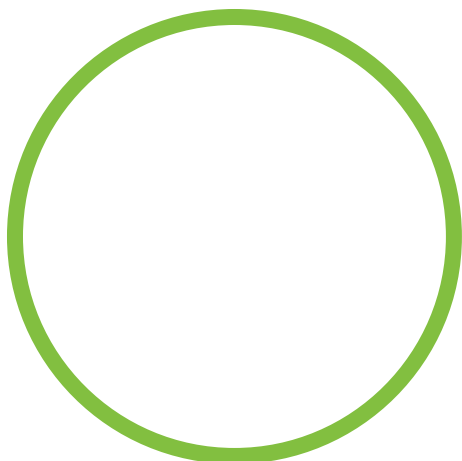
WHAT COURSES / SUBJECTS: Students complete the Achieving Together programme which includes the following:
Functional Skills or GCSE Maths (3 hours pw).
Functional Skills or GCSE English (3 hours pw).
Functional Skills ICT (2 hours pw).
Employability/Personal Social Development (3 hours pw).
Group Tutorials (2 hours pw).
Enrichment (2 hours pw) with includes Art & Design, Cookery, History, Law & Order, PELS (Post Education Life Skills). Potential DoE and Sport for 2019-20 depending on demand and interest.
Princes Trust Achieve Programme Award is completed in the first half term for all new students in September. This includes the Communication and Team Work units. At our Hawbush site students will complete the full Princes Trust certificate qualification instead of Enrichment.

DAYS AND TIMES: Students are placed in tutor groups according to initial assessments. Students either following a Monday – Wednesday timetable or Tuesday, Thursday and Friday timetable. Those based at our Hawbush site will follow a Wednesday - Friday timetable. Students follow a 9am – 3pm day (with lunch 12-1pm).
COSTS: 14-16 years on roll at schools are charged at a rate of £7.40 per hour for the Achieving Together course. Where they are infilled onto a vocational course this is reduced to £7.10. For students who are referred by the local authority as elective home educated there is not a charge.

IF TRANSPORT INCLUDED: No transport is included.
One to one – bespoke but average £580 for 10 X 1 hour sessions
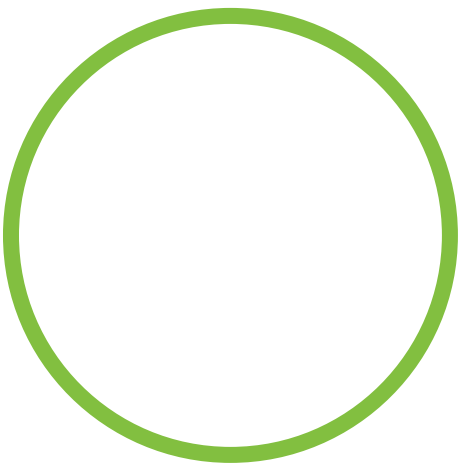
CONTACT INFORMATION:

xxx

Intervention:
Tailor made educational and emotional behavioural packages for learners from primary right through to secondary age. These can include specifically designed services ranging from mentoring, counselling, coaching, therapy and advice. Helping improve individual's performance, to improve the mental well-being of learners or to help them get their life back on the right path.

Education:
Range of qualifications for Key Stage 4 learners which will support them towards achieving progress 8 measures. Alternative Education Provision whereby learners are offered fulltime education through partner agencies (dual registration). Offering 1-8 GSCE's including Maths and English.
Offer a range of extended vocational placements for learners aged 14-19.
Block work experience placements for learners at schools, colleges and other educational establishments.

Destination:
IAG (Information Advice and Guidance) for learners from Matrix accredited advisors. Supporting learners into Further Education, Apprenticeships and fulltime employment.

DAYS AND TIMES - Monday to Friday (up to 2 days a week) 10hrs a week

COSTS - available on request, tailor made packages for each learner, PPE, Additional transport costs if needed (Bus Passes)

QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK FOR ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

Self-Assessment Form for Providers

NAME OF
PROVIDER:

1. **INTRODUCTION**

For the purposes of this guidance the definition of Alternative Provision is as follows:

For the purposes of this guidance, the definition of alternative provision is as follows: education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; education arranged by schools for pupils on a fixed period exclusion; and pupils being directed by schools to off-site provision to improve their behaviour.

DfE Statutory Guidance for local Authorities January 2013

The Alternative Provision Quality Assurance Framework aims to:

- Improve provider performance
- Raise the profile of Alternative Providers in Sandwell
- Establish better collaboration between commissioners and Alternative Providers
- Safeguard the wellbeing of all children accessing education in the Alternative Provision (AP) sector
- Ensure all learners receive consistently high- quality learning experiences and their statutory entitlement
- Inspire confidence across Alternative Providers and support the culture of continual improvement within the AP sector
- Enable recognition and sharing of good practice across schools, colleges and other providers

The Framework is based on the view that effective quality assurance:

- Is on going
- Places the learners and learning at the centre of quality assurance
- Is embedded in effective partnerships between the commissioners, Alternative Provider and learners
- Places emphasis on the fundamental importance of self-evaluation and continual improvement

2. **FRAMEWORK**

There should be no major aspects of the framework which Alternative Providers are not already familiar with as it reflects and builds on national inspection requirements.

All Alternative Providers are fully responsible for the quality of learning that they provide. The framework provides consistent requirements that support the regular review of each Alternative Provider.

The framework covers **seven themes** as follows:

1. Safeguarding
2. Health and Safety
3. Admissions, Guidance and Support
4. Teaching and Learning
5. Outcomes for learners
6. Leadership and Management
7. Professional Development

The Framework outlines the requirements that would be expected to be evidenced in each theme. The "Evidence" Column suggests the types of documents, or other information that would support the provider in showing how they meet the required standards.

3. **THE QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS**

A) **The Quality Assurance Team**

It is envisaged that the QA team will assess all providers bi-annually. Each provider will be given one weeks notice of the visit. We advise all providers to read the framework document and prepare all relevant evidence for the day of the QA visit.

If there are any queries in advance, please contact the QA lead who will support you in your preparations for the visit.

Visits will be conducted by 2 or more assessors to ensure consistency and enable standardization of the assessment process. The expectation would be that each visit is carried out in partnership with the providers instead of 'done' to the provider. Therefore, we would expect and welcome managers to join the assessment team.

Each visit would take no longer than one day.

Each visit will result in a report which will be moderated by the full QA team.

A Quality Assurance Team will consist of representatives from the Fair Access Partnerships.

B) **Cycle of Review (for providers)**

The diagram outlines the structure of the annual cycle and where the onsite visit fits within the wider process.
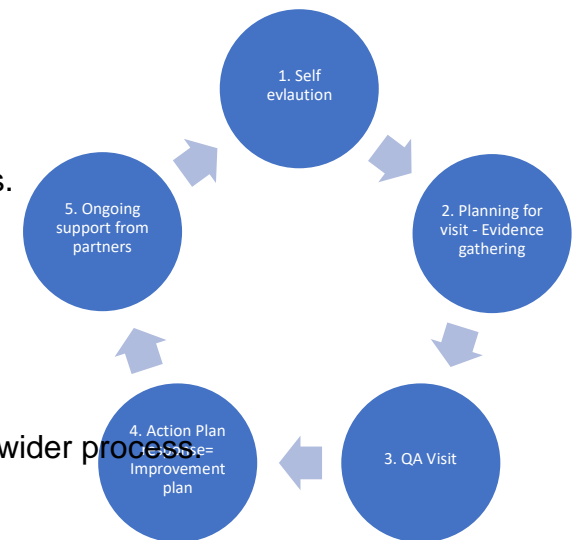
1. Providers Self Evaluation
2. Planning for QA (Gathering Evidence)
3. QA visit
4. Action Planning
5. Ongoing support

1. Self evlaution
2. Planning for visit - Evidence gathering
3. QA Visit
4. Action Plan Case= Improvement plan
5. Ongoing support from partners

THEME ONE: **SAFEGUARDING REQUIREMENT**

PRINCIPLE: Young people feel safe

Lead member of staff, contact details			
	Requirement	**Evidence**	**Requirement met (circle)**
1	**Access to the site is restricted to registered pupils and the organisation's own staff** **All staff have current required checks which are recorded on a single central register**	• SCR and HR files • Controlled access to Site • Sign in procedures • Supervision at arrival, departure and social times in place. • Visitor's procedures • Contractors have appropriate checks and supervision. • Shared site arrangements if appropriate	FULLY PARTIALL Y NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE
COMMENTS			
2	**Section 175 Audit & Action Plan in place**	• BCC 175 audit and action plan complete and tracking progress against action presented.	FULLY PARTIALL Y
COMMENTS			

| 3 | **Appropriate policies and procedures in place to safeguard children** | • Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy (to cover the following: Prevent, CSE, FGM, FM, Relationship abuse, Domestic Violence, Drugs and Substance misuse , Gangs, Fabricated Illness, Bullying, Faith Abuse, Gender based violence, private fostering, sexting and trafficking)
• Staff Behaviour Policy/Code of Conduct
• Whistleblowing Procedures
• Recruitment & Selection Policies
• E- Safety policy and strategy
• First Aid Policy | FULLY

PARTIALLY

NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE |

	Requirement	Evidence	Requirement met (circle)
4	**Designated safeguarding lead in place**	• DSL and cover for DSL in place. • Appropriately training and attendance at DSL network	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE
COMMENTS			
5	**Robust procedures for logging concerns, record keeping and sharing information**	• Student files and referrals. • CP file are well structured and organized and securely held. • Tracking of vulnerable learners and associated risks.	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE

COMMENTS

6	**Appropriate provision for Looked After Children**	• Designated person for LAC. • Communications with virtual school. • LAC files.	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED

COMMENTS

	Requirement	Evidence	Requirement met (circle)
7	**Appropriate procedures to safeguard Children Not in School**	• Registers procedures. • Attendance policy and procedures • Communication with commissioners and parents. • Children missing in education procedures • Contact details of LA Officers and arrangements. (see BSCB website)	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE

COMMENTS

8	**Curriculum programme includes safeguarding training for children and young people**	• Curriculum plans include opportunities for students to explore: - CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation) - DV (Domestic Violence) - FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) - FM (Forced Marriage) - Substance misuse - Gangs - Radicalisation and extremism • Displays , literature and students voice show evidence that children and learners are aware of support available to them.	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE
COMMENTS			

THEME TWO: HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENT

GUIDING PRINCIPLE: Young people are safe on and off the premises

Lead member of staff, contact details		
	Requirement	**Evidence**	**Requirement met (circle)**

	Requirement	**Evidence**	**Requirement met (circle)**
1	**An up to date Health and safety policy is in place and accessible to all staff, young people, carers and visitors and a there is a designated person trained to IOSH standard who is held ultimately responsible for health and safety**	• Designated Health and Safety Trained Officer (IOSH) • Displayed notice naming the designated person for health and safety to whom these issues should be reported • Knowledge of requirements of health and safety legislation • 'Competent' health and safety advice avail-	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE

2	**Risk assessments have been carried out to identify significant risks on site**	• Adequate risk control measures/ risk register. • Record of at least yearly regular reviews	FULLY PARTIALLY

3	**Fire drills take place regularly, at least once a year**	- Fire alarms are regularly tested and meet the Fire Brigade's criteria Fire extinguishers tested regularly - Staff trained in fire prevention measures - Diary showing recent fire drills and notes - Certificate showing tests of fire alarms	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE

	Requirement	Evidence	Requirement met (circle)
4	**Public liability insurance policy is current and the insurance certificate is displayed**	• Public liability insurance document • Other relevant insurance documents	FULLY PARTIALLY

COMMENTS

5	**First aid equipment and/or facilities are readily available** • Is the organisation familiar with RIDDOR procedures? (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995) www.hse.gov.uk	• Arrangements for access to a qualified first aider • Recording systems for accidents and first aid treatments and notification to the and/or the parents/carers • Evidence of any RIDDOR investigations underway or outcomes pending • List of trained first aiders displayed • Medical Needs policy • Care plans.	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE

COMMENTS

6	**Arrangements are in place for supervision of young people**	• Supervision arrangements • Rotas • Ratios of staff to young people identified according to need and upheld	FULLY PARTIALLY

COMMENTS

THEME THREE: **ADMISSIONS, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

GUIDING PRINCIPLE: Learners access tailored learning programmes and support matched to their individual needs

	Criteria	Evidence Presented	Criteria Met (circle)
1	**Admission and referrals procedures are clear and well supported**	• Admission/ Referral policy • Admission/ Referral application forms • Integration process/ Student files • Induction process: base lining, Learning Plans, Timetables, Groups (register) , CEIAG	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE
COMMENTS			

2	**All learners participate in an induction process that will help them understand options, health and safety procedures, their rights and responsibilities and are aware of equal opportunities**	• Integration process/ Student files • Induction process: base lining, Learning Plans, Timetables, Groups (register) , CEIAG • ILPs • Student voice	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE

COMMENTS

3	**Learners have a forum to express opinions and raise issues**	• Student council • Student questionnaires • Tutor systems • Examples of how students voice shaped provi-	FULLY PARTIALLY

COMMENTS

4	**A structured process of CEIAG is in place which supports students progression into further education employment or training.**	• CEIAG offer • Individual plans • Partnership with colleges, WBLP, Schools, employers • Destination data • Post 16 application processes and procedure	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE

THEME FOUR: **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

GUIDING PRINCIPLE: Learners access high quality teaching and learning experiences and make good progress

	Requirement	Evidence	Requirement met (circle)
1	**Teaching staff are appropriate to deliver programmes**	- Safer recruitment policy and procedures - SCR/HR files - Training register - CPD - Links to schools and providers	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE

COMMENTS

2	**Planning for learning shows:** 1. **Lesson/session plans identify the knowledge, skills and understanding that different groups of learners will achieve** 2. **Regular and thorough assessment and review of progress takes place.**	• Timetable • Curriculum Plan • Session planning / Lesson plans. • SOW • Individual Plans • Exam Policy and procedures • Assessment policy and procedures • Reports home/ School • Students books and portfolios	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE

COMMENTS

3	**Appropriate resources are available to deliver the curriculum offered.**	• Curriculum Plan • Session planning / Lesson plans. • SOW • Individual Plans • Staff training register • Deployment of Key workers. • Safety equipment etc.	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE

COMMENTS

	Requirement	Evidence	Requirement met (circle)
4	**There are productive working relationships between staff and learners leading to effective feedback and positive learning outcomes.**	• Behaviour policy and procedure • Rules, routines, rewards and sanctions • Lesson Observations • Behaviour Data • Attendance and Behaviour reports to commissioner's	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE

COMMENTS

5	**Learners understand the importance of attendance, punctuality and classroom and workshop behaviour and comply appropriately.**	• Attendance and punctuality policy and procedures • Rules, routines, rewards and sanctions • Students files • Exclusion policy and procedures • Accident reporting	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE

COMMENTS

THEME FIVE: **OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN**

GUIDING PRINCIPLE: Learners achieve high standards and make good progress relative to their starting points

	Requirement	Evidence	Requirement met (circle)
1	**Learners meet the targets set in relation to their starting points and make at least good progress**	• Progress trackers/data • Formative and summative assessment • Portfolios and books • Reports home – schools • Students voice	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE

COMMENTS

2	**Analysis of assessment data enables clear indications of:** • **how well the provider is doing in relation to its targets** • **how effective it is in identi-**	• Exam outcomes • Unit completion and progress against syllabus • Attendance and behavior data • Rewards and Sanctions • Exclusions data	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE

COMMENTS

3	**Underperformance is addressed through appropriate intervention and support**	• Planning • Menu of intervention e.g., Literacy, Numeracy, Behaviour , SEN7 • Updated ILP showing regular reviews.	FULLY PARTIALLY

COMMENTS
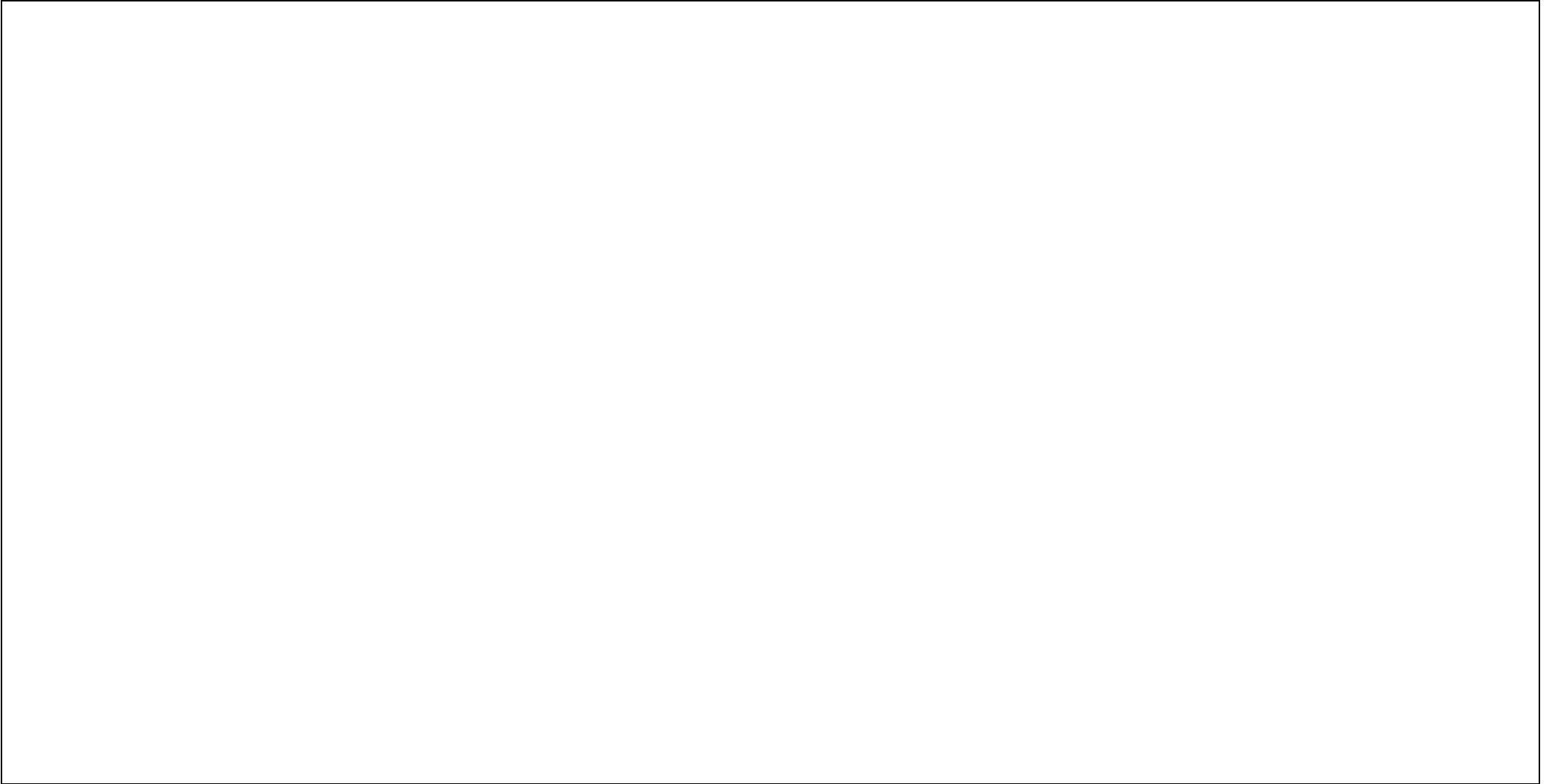
THEME SIX: **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

GUIDING PRINCIPLE: Leaders and managers work with commissioners to focus on consistently improving outcomes for learners

	Criteria	Evidence Presented	Criteria Met (circle)
1	**There is a secure agreement setting out the responsibility of the provider and the feeder institution** **Schools and providers work in partnership with individual learners and parents and carers to monitor and review individual needs, abilities and aspirations.**	• Signed SLA with Commissioners. • ILP aligned to EHCP /Statements as appropriate. • Reports to commissioners. • Clear arrangement and contracts with sub-contractors.	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE

2	**Representative group or groups exist and meet regularly to plan and develop provision**	• Attendance at provider briefings, networks and training. • Use of head Teacher notice board.	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE
3	**Effective lines of communication exist within and between organisations**	• Regular reports to commissioners • Commissioners visits • Attendance at provider briefings, networks and training. • Commissioner attendance at reviews: CP meetings, LAC reviews, Spotlight SWARMs,/ YOT reviews.	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE
COMMENTS			

	Criteria	Evidence Presented	Criteria Met (circle)
4	**Clear lines of responsibility for the co-ordination and delivery of the programme are in place in both home, school and the provider.**	• Staffing structures and lines of accountability within organisation • SLA- outlining Providers responsibilities and commissioner's responsibilities. • Named link person to commissioners/networks	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE
COMMENTS			
5	**Effective self-evaluation procedures are in place**	• SEF/ SAR • Internal Improvement- Development Plans • External Audit reports • Audit reports/ Annual accounts • Any previous QA visits and corresponding reports. • Referral/ Admissions data (Last 3 years)	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE

COMMENTS

THEME SEVEN: **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

GUIDING PRINCIPLE: Opportunities are available for continuous professional development access to opportunities for sharing good practice.

	Criteria	Evidence Presented	Criteria Met (circle)
1	**Strategies are in place to ensure that the professional development needs of the individual/provider/institution are met**	• Staff Development/ CPD policy and procedures • Performance management/ Appraisal Policy and procedures • Training registers for staff. • Recruitment and retention data • Attendance at partnership and LA meetings and training.	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE
COMMENTS			

2	**Mechanisms exist for identifying and responding to the specific needs of staff involved in delivering programmes**	- Staff Development/ CPD policy and procedures - Performance management/ Appraisal Policy and procedures - Training registers for staff. - Recruitment and retention data - Attendance at partnership and LA meetings and training. - Work shadowing /joint teaching opportunities with commissioners.	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE
COMMENTS			
3	**Good practice is identified and disseminated across all participating staff and with other organisations**	- Staff Voice/ Questionnaires. - Staff notice boards showing sharing of best practice celebrating good Practice. - Training events arranged for commissioners to share best practice. - Membership of BEP and TSA.	FULLY PARTIALLY NOT AT ALL/LIMITED EVIDENCE

COMMENTS

300

Following the review of the seven themes it would be useful for the following quality improvement plan (QUIP) to be developed. It will enable you as the provider to identify clearly the areas for improvement for the coming year.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (QUIP)

Reporter: **Date:**

Areas for improvement (theme and criterion)	Actions	By when	Person responsible	Date and review of Progress

Please also write your comments on the recent QA process here:

What was beneficial?

Any issues arising?

How could the process be improved to help you develop provision?

Things you would be proud to share with others?

AP QA Process Guidelines

Quality Assurance for Providers

NAME OF PROVIDER

SITE ADDRESS

Contents

Guidance Notes for QA Staff

The Process:

a) **Notification and Timetable**

- A Date for the QA visit will be agreed at least 1 weeks before the visits.

- A timetable for the day will be agreed and finalised at least 1 week before the date of the visit.

- The Health and Safety checklist will be sent beforehand for completion.

b) **Preparation for Visit**

- On the day of the visit the QA framework themes will be explored in line with the timetable.

- Read the framework and have as much evidence ready to discuss with the Lead. This will help the lead assurer to write notes against each section of the framework to help inform the final report.

c) **On the Day of the Visit**

- There will be two quality assurance partners in attendance during the day of the QA process.

- The Lead will introduce the team and go through the timetable for the day.

- The completed Health and Safety Questionnaire will be given to the Lead.

- Each section of the day is linked to one of the themes in the QA Framework and as the provider discusses all the key evidence to show how they have fulfilled the standards, the reviewers will make notes on their copy of the framework and note pad.

- At the end of the day the reviewer will summarise what you have all discussed and begin to complete the school improvement plan at the back of the framework document.

d) After the QA Visit

- The Lead reviewer will collate all their notes from the day of the QA visit and will write the report in the proforma enclosed in the framework.

- Approximately 2 weeks after the visit the report will be moderated by the wider QA working group.

- One week after the moderation process the final report will be written and submitted to the key stakeholders.

- All providers will receive a final copy of the report within 4 weeks of completion of the QA visit.

e) Lesson Observations

- The lesson observations will follow the agreed schedule shown in the timetable.

- The lesson observation proforma from the provider will be used.

- Observation feedback will be done by internal colleagues.

f) Work Scrutiny

- SLT will help with the work scrutiny process where possible.

- The work scrutiny will follow the agreed schedule, as shown in the timetable.

- Work scrutiny template to be used to evaluate.

- The students from the work scrutiny should be pulled from a range of grades, e.g. 2 students with distinction; 2 with merit and 2 with pass = 6 students in all.

g) Interview

- The provider's student interviews will follow the agreed interview schedule, as shown in the timetable.

- Interview template to be used to evaluate.

- The interviews should take place across a range of students attending the provision.

AP QA Monitoring Visit Sample Timetable

Time	Focus	Theme from Framework
8.30 – 8.45	Meet with Headteacher to finalise arrangements for the day	
8.45 – 9.15	CT & JT file check	**Theme 1/Theme 2**
9.15 – 10.00	Meeting with designated safeguarding lead - Referrals - Training - Policy and practice	**Theme 3**
10.00 – 11.00	Lesson observations	**Theme 4**
11.00 – 12.00	Meet with teaching and learning lead - Baseline - Assessment - Tracking and Progress - CPD	**Theme 5/7**

12.00 – 12.30	Meet with group of students	**Theme 1/2/3/4/5**
12.30 – 1.30	Meet with Headteacher - Quality and impact of provision - Self-evaluation - School Development Planning	**Theme 6**
1.30 – 2.10	Lesson observations	**Theme 4**
2.10 – 2.40	Lunch	
2.40 – 3.30	Meet with Staff	**Theme 7**
3.30-4.10	Feedback	

Student Interview Feedback Sheet

Questions	Responses
Do you feel safe at this provision?	
Is there anything that could be done here to make you feel safer?	
What kind of teaching and learning activities do you experience in your lessons?	

What do you enjoy most about being at this provision?	
What are your aspirations beyond KS4? What would you like to happen next?	
How hard do you work in class? How are you challenged to do better?	
Do you enjoy your lessons? Why?	
How would you describe behaviour in your lessons and around the provision?	
How are you helped with difficulties in your understanding of a concept?	
How do you know about your progress?	

What would you say to other students who want to come here?	
How would you describe your behaviour here? Has this improved from your previous school?	
Other comments from pupil	

Work Scrutiny Feedback Sheet

Criteria	Observations made
	Is evidence: 1-Strong 2- good 3-satisfactory 4-inadequate Please indicate your decisions for your grading.
Is the folder/exercise book updated? Are assignment briefs completed?	
Are notes checked - signed - misconceptions highlighted and corrected?	
Answers to questions / assignments graded and constructive comments made on how to reach next grade / level etc	

Advice and opportunities for extended work / research/ independent work	
Evidence of exam questions / assessments and feed-back	
Evidence of mark sheet / assessment marks from teacher (BTEC courses)	
Evidence of support for development of literacy, nu-meracy, research, thinking skills and independent work (templates)	
Evidence of differentiation based on individual ability. I.E. SEN / G&T	
Other observations	

Staff Feedback Sheet

My role in this school/academy/college is best described as:

Member of Senior Leadership Team / Middle leader / Teacher / Support staff – teaching / Support staff – other.

Put a circle for each statement using the following key:

313

1-'strongly agree'**, 2-** 'agree', **3-**'disagree', or **4-**'strongly disagree'

Statements	Answers
• I am proud to be a member of staff at this provision	1 2 3 4
• Children are safe at this provision	1 2 3 4
• The provision successfully meets the differing needs of individual pupils	1 2 3 4
• Behaviour is good in this provision	1 2 3 4
• I know what we are trying to achieve at this provision. There is a clear vision.	1 2 3 4
• This provision consistently achieves what it sets out to accomplish	1 2 3 4
• Leaders do all they can to improve teaching and Learning.	1 2 3 4

• This provision deals with any cases of bullying effectively (including persistent name-calling, cyber, racist and homophobic bullying).	1 2 3 4
• All staff consistently apply provision policies.	1 2 3 4
• My professional development is well supported	1 2 3 4
• If you wish to explain any of your answers, or add any further comments about the provision, please give details here. If you are making a disclosure about child protection, you are advised to contact your local authority designated officer within children's services. If you record a disclosure on this questionnaire, you must include your name.	

Staff Interview Sheet

Questions	Answers
• Do you know who has the responsibility for Safeguarding in the provision?	
• What should you do if a safeguarding issue comes to light?	
• How would you describe the behaviour of students in your provision?	
• How are staff supported in their professional development?	
• What are the key priorities of your provision?	
• How are key issues shared with staff?	

Appendix 12: Content Analysis of LA Documentation

NB

It is important to note that the total numbers recorded for the 'recording units' does not equate to the number of times the words were used. This is because in some instances if the word 'Alternative Provision' appeared within a sentence more than once, in this instance it was recorded as '1'. Furthermore, some sentences may have also been coded twice for example *"schools and providers work in partnership with individual learners and parents and carers to monitor and review individual needs and aspirations"* (Quality assurance framework) was coded under collaborative working and monitoring AP. The values given by this analysis are given to provide an overview and are not to be treated as exact values.

The following tables will present the findings from the content analysis (CA) of the three LA documentations I was provided on request during stage 2 of IE (appendices 8,9, 10). The first document analysed was the AP directory (appendix 8) which is available to all in the LA, schools, APs, parents/carers and YP. It covers some information on the available provider (e.g., what they offer and price), service level agreements and the AP Panel referral form with factors for consideration. The second and third document analysed (appendices 9, 10) were the quality assurance framework and guidelines for providers. This was related to monitoring provision within AP. Due to time constraints CA was completed on the documents collectively rather than individually as there was several 'recording units' of interest.

Alternative Provision or equivalent term

Table 11: CA for the Recording Unit 'Alternative provision'

In reference to:	No. of times used
Accountability	13
AP offer (pastoral support and rei-integration into mainstream)	10
Approved APs with specific reference to independent status	8
Attendance	4
Collaborative Working	18
Contracts between schools and AP and LA contracts with AP	3
Curriculum	5

Finances	8
Health and Safety	10
Improving AP	6
Legislation	4
Meeting needs (e.g., SEN)	6
Monitoring AP through quality assurance with specific timescales	11
Parents (communication with parents, parental consent, parental involvement, and preference)	8
Safeguarding	17
Staff in AP (training, teaching, staff views, & provision policies)	15
The Young person (benefits to YP, motivating YP, time spent in AP, aspirations, history, views, behaviour and YP's rights.)	13
Transport	2

Alternative Provision Panel or equivalent term

Table 12: CA for the Recording Unit 'Alternative provision Panel'

In reference to:	**No of times used**
Date brought to panel	1
Forms	2
Panel's Decision	1
Funding	1

Referral or equivalent term

Table 13: CA for the Recording Unit 'Referral'

In reference to:	**No of times used**
Considerations for referral	2
Reason for referral	1
Referral data	1
Referral details	1
Referral procedures (referral form)	11

Timescales (dates of referral)	3

Educational Psychologist or equivalent term

Table 14: CA for the Recording Unit 'Educational Psychologist'

In reference to:	No of times used
Referral form	2

School exclusion or equivalent term

Table 15: CA for the Recording Unit 'Exclusion'

In reference to:	No of times used
Finances	1
Data	2
Risk of exclusion	2
Timescales in Exclusion	1

Appendix 13: Feedback to the LA

The following includes the agenda and key findings which were presented to the LA at a feedback meeting. Discussion points were recorded during the meeting and actions points were developed based on this.

Meeting with LA

Feedback on Illuminative Research into accessing and using Alternative Provision as a preventative approach to secondary school exclusion.

Date: 09.07.2021

Attendees: Jas Kandola (Trainee ECP), Laura(head of Seabreeze), XXX (CME team), XXX (Fair Exclusions team), XXX (ECP), and XXX (Fair exclusion team)

Meeting Agenda:

> 1) A brief introduction to Illuminative Research and its relation to the study, e.g., rationale.
>
> 2) How the research was completed, e.g., the method
>
> 3) Strengths of using APs and issues for consideration
>
> 4) strengths of the AP Panel and issues for consideration
>
> 5) The role of the EP in this context

Opportunity for discussion in between 2-5, allowing for considerations of issues raised to be discussed and action points to be made.

Research Questions:

1. How do key professionals view the use of APs as a preventative approach to school permanent exclusion?

2. What are professionals' perceptions of the AP Panel as an effective process for accessing AP?

3. How do key professional think that the AP panel could be further developed.

4. How do key professionals think EPs can support in this context to ensure the best outcome for YP?

Items:

1) Introduction into Illuminative Research (IR)

- A methodological approach set to explore innovatory programs, for example how they operate, how is it influenced by the context in which it is applied and how does the innovation or 'program initiative' impact the YP. (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Parlett,

1972; Jamieson et al.,, 1977; Burden, 2008). The program initiative is APs & the AP Panel.

- By using this approach, areas of strengths and issues for consideration can emerge (Burden, 2008).

- The purpose of this method is to also build a 'recognisable reality' of what is happening in practice. (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972; Parlett 1974; Burden 2008)

- Two concepts underpin the IR approach 'the instructional system' & the 'learning milieu'.

  o Instructional system (IS) – is how the program initiative is applied to the current system. The IS in this study is the Children & Families Act (2014), that every YP has the right to an education and DfE (2013) statutory guidance around the use of AP.

  o Learning Milieu – the context in which the research is taking place- Inclusion support and children services.

2) Stages of Illuminative Research and how it was carried out.

IR is a five staged approach:

Stage 1: setting up the investigation.

- Meeting with key professional including Moira

- Establishing other key people to liaise with

- Agreeing what would be researched with Moira e.g. timescales and method.

Stage 2: open ended exploration

- Observation of AP Panel & AP Panel

- Collection of LA Documentation

Stage 3: Focused inquires:

- Interviews will key professional identified through stages 1 & 2.

Stage 4: Interpretation

- Interviews were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). All data was coded and commonalities in participants viewpoints generated the themes in the data.

- LA documentation was analysed by using Principle of content Analysis. The recording units of interest were 'Alternative provision', 'Alternative Provision Panel', 'referral', 'school exclusion', 'Educational Psychologist' or equivalent terms.

Stage 5: Reporting the study

- Today's meeting

- Follow up report including main points from the discussion.

3) Research Q 1): Strengths of using AP and issues for consideration

Strengths

- AP can be used positive to reduce school's exclusion, professional viewed this was most successful when this was through dual placement and schools taking ownership and responsibility for YP:

  - Patricia: *The dual nature of placement meant that he still felt like he was part of the school and that the school wanted him and accepted him.*

  - Peter: *I'm totally against schools having the ability to wash their hands of kids and just leave them to their own devices. And there is where I think problem arises.*

- Collaborative working was essential to the success storied shared by professionals, e.g., between schools, APs and LA.

- Positive experiences of AP meant that YP were able to re-participate in learning, take part in a meaningful curriculum, build relationships, and develop some of the life skills needs for adulthood.

  - James: *his mainstream provider said that he would end up in prison, never once was there a behaviour issues and he achieved the highest marks.*

- Success was dependent on YP investment, and when AP was used positively and not as a sanction.

- Last Resort – showing that schools are perhaps trying to be more inclusive and that schools are following LA framework to access AP.

Discussions

Overall professional perceived that the findings resonated with practice, not only with using APs but also the work on managed moves.

The LA professionals reflected in the meeting that dual placement was essential for AP to work as preventative approach to school exclusion. The sense of collocation was also linked to the work happing in the LA on managed moves. Schools must be seen to take accountability and responsibility for young people.

APs being used as a Last resort as a result of failed of Manged Moves, is there a way they can be used more preventively at earlier stage in collaboration and dual placement with school. LA Professional reflected on cases whether this was the right decision or using it earlier would be more useful. Professional also thought about YP needs and voice. Who do we do it for, school or YP? Some professional thought there needs to be more awareness and teaching around the rights of the child and for this to at the forefront of the discussions.

The LA shared concerned around the perception of using APs, and how this may look to outside agencies e.g. Ofsted. They felt that these perceptions impacted decisions on using APs as preventative approach to school exclusion.

There was also a recognition that the Socio-Political climate has impacted the use of AP, one size does not fit all. Narrowing of the curriculum has made it challenging for some young people and schools.

The focus needs to be on creating good provision rather than critiquing them. Reducing the stigma and understanding that alternative education is not worth less than mainstream education.

Issues for consideration

Using APs:

- Last Resort – should we being using APs more preventatively. Could this be used more as an intervention rather than provision.

- School's panicking

    o Patricia: *Schools tend to panic, they think. Oh my gosh we can't cope with this child, shove him over there in AP.*

- The 'holding Pending' – for assessments and to provide school with Respite. This goes against the right of the child and can be seen colluding with exclusionary practices.

    o John: *…it appears easier for school to access an AP than it does to go through the EHCP route for specialist's place….by virtue of the system, that the AP is almost a bit of a shortcut.*

- The need for explicit entry and exit criteria for AP & AP Panel - professional perceived there was a lack of entry and exit criteria for using AP. Factors included graduated assessment, matching AP to YP needs, timescales, supported transition, family involvement, YP - voice, hook, future aspirations and buy in.

    o Ella: *but if the child doesn't think that or engage with it, they're never gonna do it and its about that.*

    o Sam: *…it wasn't referred to me until a decision had been made over AP, so I wasn't particularly involved in the graduated assessment.*

Secondary Schools:

- Lack of early intervention – linked to lack of identification of needs and SEN provision in secondary schools.

    o Patricia: *some schools are not great identifying either…They don't identify kids; they don't pick up on those early behaviours.*

- Understanding behaviour linked to SEN – the challenges with recognising behaviour linked to SEN. YP seen as 'naughty' and disruptive. This was linked to adult attitudes and attribution of behaviour. The situation is far more complex, and professional felt that this might be linked to lack of experiences, expertise, and confidence to meet needs.

    o John: *At what point is it becoming a naughty pupil? Actually it's probably got some needs. That's a real barrier to the right identification of those needs*

- o Mary: *Teachers now they're not teachers, they're expected to be social workers and SEN experts an family support workers….i think things are being missed because schools are expected to be everything to everybody.*

- School systems 'pastoral' & 'SEN' – communication and power dynamics between the two systems impacting the outcomes, intervention and support offered to YP.

  - o Sam: *…there's a disconnect between pastoral/behaviour support and the SEN department….the decisions around accessing AP are often taken with Pastoral/ behaviour conversation where SEN is necessarily not recognised as an appropriate kind of participant of that…*

- Ongoing training was linked to overcoming some of the issues discussed in secondary schools.

  - o Mary: *Do they get enough SEMH training, or do they go..oh thats the* SENCo *role?*

Discussion:

LA professionals reflected that they could understand the findings/issues for consideration. They recognised that AP Panel use comes at crisis point, and they the needed to be sympathetic towards schools in crisis. But recognised the need to also still be able to constructively challenge decisions to refer. Sometimes this was a hard balance given the nature of the relationships between LA and academies.

Professional felt there need to be more work with SENCos in school to unify systems in school. however, this was an ongoing struggle in some schools, schools had started to work with the LA on this through various forums. There is some ongoing work in the LA which is addressing this. The LA noted the Issues with resourcing in schools and can hamper school's creativity. There has been some discussions and ongoing work since the research to explore how secondary schools can create onsite provisions to support the inclusion of these vulnerable YP.

The issue of AP being used as respite required further careful consideration, the LA felt there needed to be more explicit awareness of the duty of care and rights of the child. Protection that it's the right reasons for YP and family and not for respite. Professionals could understand where the 'Holding pen' narrative has stemmed from, there was an emphasis on the importance of ensuring that this is done with family and YP and not done to them.

Exploring training of teachers in LA, to be more inclusive in schools and reducing punitive approaches in secondary schools through training and evidence-based approaches. This was considered as important to professionals.

It was recognised that there need to be clear that the entry requirement needed to make it explicitly clear that AP is not used as punitive punishment or sanction. However professional were cautious about having a set entry and exit criteria due to the risk of losing personalisation. However emphasis was placed on the voice of the young person in the use of any criteria.

There was also discussion around identifying young people in year 7 and 8 before it gets to AP, potential discussion at school planning meetings to plan. Professional reflected whether there was more of an opportunity to use AP as a prevention at this stage.

4) Research Q2 and 3: Strengths of the AP Panel and issues for consideration

Strengths

- The program initiative itself – AP Panel

    - Ella: *we're going from 0 to 100 in one go and so that when the Panel was set up that was very much about that strategic overview so that there was a check and balance.*

- Holistic nature of panel through the attendance of various professionals from children services. Decision making informed by the holistic approach.

    - Peter: *…I think there is respect amongst people that amongst the Panel and we do respect differing viewpoints, and one of the reasons for having Panel, is to get a variety of viewpoints of the situation.*

- School investment to panel, LA managing the power dynamics between schools and APs.

- Safeguarding YP

    - Grace: *one of the reasons the Panel was set up to make sure that we've got oversight for making sure that we know where these children are going.*

- Holding professional, schools and AP accountable

    - Peter: *have you really investigated this child's special educational needs. What's the evidence that you have done X and Y before you have got to this stage.*

- Offering a safe space to challenge one another.

Discussion:

Professional perceived the strengths emerged in the data resonated with how they felt about the AP Panel. They recognised keeping investment from schools is a balancing act, and that this can be underappreciated. They also stated they believed some schools are making the effort to fill in the paperwork. Schools were also much better at working with the LA to seek alternatives rather than permanently excluding a young person, despite having the autonomy to not involve the LA.

Issues for Consideration

- Graduated Assessment

    - Sam: *there 's a very big distinction between a young person who's experiencing challenge but had never had support vs the young person who has had loads of support. And actually, what we have learned through those cycles of intervention is actually mainstream is probably not the right place for them.*

- - John: *…the needs assessment once they're there is arguably too late, that should actually happen in mainstream.*

  - Grace: *I think there is a lack of understanding for some of the challenges these children have. And were making decisions without really understanding them.* (linked to YP's voice).

- Information presented to panel

  - John*: … Information provided can be very limited and sort of word of mouth and hearsay as opposed to data and written information.*

  - Grace *..war & peace*

- Young person (voice, meeting needs and behaviour)

  - James: *it's about what will meet the needs of the student the best. This should in-form the decisions. Also, the voice of the child. What does the child want?"*

  - Mary: *I sometimes think the local authority is financially driven rather than drive by the needs of the child.*

  - Patricia*: …challenging behaviour like the level of aggression or a young person might be exhibiting, then I think that may well have a heavy influence on the decision making.*

- Panel members

  - John: *…right people on Panel who have the right skills and knowledge of the systems and the child and SEN to make sure that it works*

  - Ella: *…if somebody feels strongly about something, they have that option to be heard to explain….that is all taken into consideration when we collectively make a final decision.*

  - Mary: *she now feels that she doesn't have a valued opinion. She actually came to me after last Panel and said I don't know why I bother.*

- Transparency in AP -Panel e.g., emergency panel and AP Panel for non-panel members
- Delays in panels – YP being passed around various panels creating delays and impacting YP.

Discussions:

LA professional acknowledged the issues for consideration and felt that some of these could be addressed with some ongoing development. Since the research has taken place, advisory colleagues and EPs have started to attend panel. There was also discussion around communicating the panel processes in the LA with other professionals. The LA noted that a service briefing maybe useful to do this.

The discussion with the LA was dominated on the findings surrounding the YP and how to make the process more person centred and in line with the principles of the children and families Act (2014). This included the following points

- ❖ Involving the young person more, limited parent and YP view, are we doing it to them rather than with them?

- ❖ Vital to getting the voice of parents and child – hard when parents and YP don't come to panel. Are we getting the correct information? Having a person-centred ethos and incorporating this into panel.

- ❖ Adding child and parent views, to provide equal weight to the discussion. Considering having a pre-meeting to AP Panel with parents and young people. Need to consider who does this, when and how – ensuring a 'tell it once' approach.

5) R4: The role of the EP in this context

Strengths:

- Working and advocating for families and YP

  - Peter: …*the EP has built a good rapport with the family and support the family to understand what school has put in place but also advocate for the family…they built trust and respect when working with school and family.*

  - John: ...*the EP can be skilled in kind of working with the family and child…*

- EPs providing a holistic perspective

  - Grace: *I think for many of these children, they have so many different needs to be able to identify that from a holistic point of view is critical to make the right decision. So I think EPs are very important in that...*

- EPs encouraging a change in perspective

  - James: *…the psychological effects of the life situation on the child and understand that when a child misbehaves in class it isn't necessarily down to them or their fault, it's about understanding and looking at the history of that child.*

Issues for Consideration:

- Lack of EP involvement in graduated assessment prior AP use

  - Sam: *so where in a position of catch up in terms of assessment or advice….you often think well if we can look back retrospectively could more be done at earlier point.*

- Lack of EP involvement in decision making e.g., attending panel

- Working systemically through consultation with professionals in this context e.g., professionals in AP, schools, and children services.

- Lack of EP involvement until statutory request:

  - Patricia: *…we get them through the statutory route, and then ill pick them up then. But never having laid eyes on a young person before, you know when they were in school.*

- Barriers to accessing the service included:
    - Perception of EP role & capacity
    - Pace of EP support
    - Perception of YP's behaviour
    - School willingness to go through process to access EP support.
- Working in APs to support senior leadership to develop policy and practice to support the wellbeing of all.
- EP's delivering training to support schools and AP to think about needs of young person differently.

Discussions:

Professional recognised the findings and suggested that perceptions of the EP role can prevent schools accessing the service. The LA reflected on capacity of EPs and how they could work more systemically with schools, AP to have a greater change e.g., through supervision, group consultation virtually, drop-in sessions.

The valued that APs wanted EP time and that this would be used for systemic work with staff and development of policy.

Action Points following discussion

These actions have been based on the discussion of key findings with key professionals in the LA during the meeting.

- Greater awareness and learning around the young person's rights and ensuring that every decision made has the principles of the young person's rights at the forefront.

- A greater emphasis on the voice of the YP in the 'referral process'. YP's voice to be collected and shared at the Panel, as this is something that is missing from the AP Panel.

- Hold preparation meetings with families and YP to help ascertain their views and help them understand the 'referral process'. This will enable them to make informed choices. The professional to collect consent and views can then act as an advocate for parents/YP at the AP Panel.

- Schools to attend the AP Panel to present their case; they can then be challenged and supported in person. This will help with transparency on panel decisions and support the schools with their practices.

- Ongoing systemic work with schools to help develop streamlined systems between SEN and pastoral leads by ongoing development policy and implementation, training, and consultation.

- Look at a model to support the APs via the EP service so that all young people have had some EP input even if they are not in mainstream settings. This needs to be systemic to have a wider impact on majority rather than single pieces of casework.

Appendix 14: Examples of Reflection from Research Diary

November 2019 – observing FAP

- The narrative to describe some YP can be negative and extreme, schools swapping YP "I'll take that one, if you take x". Questioning the criteria of these swaps???

- Information on forms was missing, schools were sharing this verbally. Is this hearsay rather than factual?

- Some schools challenged perspectives of other schools, offering suggestions for other interventions. Appeared collaborative and supportive environment.

- Little discussion of the voice of the YP/families.

- Relationships of professionals at FAP appeared to be quite strong, schools talking to one another after and before panel.

- When schools unwilling to take a pupil, the chair encouraged the swap, by offering support of the LA. In one case it was suggested that case be taken to the AP Panel as the YP had a failed managed move.

- FAP mainly associated with managed moves and not the use of AP – observations of the AP Panel required.

Personal reflection

Whilst I see the purpose of this panel, my personal feelings are that the right of the child are not at the forefront of these decisions. This goes against my own professional/personal value and beliefs. It was very challenging to sit and observe and not participate in the discussion

A few schools were using language I wouldn't use to describe a YP, and I feel the chair should have challenged this in an appropriate manner (perhaps this happens after panel). However, this was challenging given my own experiences of school exclusion.

January 2020 – Observation of AP Panel

- Atmosphere felt a bit hostile, lots of senior professionals.

- Decisions linked to financial constraints.

- Not all professionals shared their viewpoints, is this because they didn't have anything to share or didn't want to share???

- Conflict in viewpoints, how is this managed given so many professional, seems the chair has the final say.

- Professional appear to have a genuine care and concern for the YP – although YP voice not explicitly mentioned??

Personal reflection

I felt uncomfortable attending this panel initially, I wonder whether this was related to the fact that the panel attendees consisted of senior professionals in the LA and whether this hierarchy made me feel uncomfortable. I also wonder how this impacts other panel members.

Comparing the two panels, I felt this panel resonated more with my own values and beliefs, e.g., conversation was more holistic and professional engaged in some joint problem solving. I question whether schools lack of presence had a role to play in this.

November 2020 – Data collection (interview with X)

- Referred to my role as a psychologist, why was this? Was there power imbalance unintentionally created by my EP role.

- How does she see the EP role – referred to us as experts, perhaps this shaped her perceptions of me when asking questions.

- What did I do to alleviate this, or how could I alleviate this, consider the wording of questions?? Problem free talk at the start of interviews, more rapport building.